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Design in Industry—II

Away with Snobbery, Sentiment and Stupidity

By SERGE CHERMAYEFF

Mr. Chermayeff, well known for his share in the interior decoration of Broadcasting House and at the Cambridge Theatre, explains the fundamental principles upon which he has based his work as designer and decorator

DECORATION and furnishing are not in separate water-tight compartments, but are just the last stages in the completion of the whole—they are part and parcel of architecture and come under one heading—interior equipment. A building, whether it is an office, a theatre, or a private house, is like an organism. Each part must bear a direct relation to every other part and the whole, and, like a living organism, there must be an harmonious working together of all the separate parts. Unfortunately, we are not all endowed with sufficient imagination, intelligence, or experience to visualise a finished house in all its complexity. That is where the trained and skilled designer comes in. It is interesting to observe that not only the things we buy in shops for the interior equipment of our house, but the very house itself which we have bought all too often lack this quality of complete understanding and harmony.

But let me begin with little things. Mr. Annesley Voysey, the father of contemporary architecture, said that he found it as important to design the pepper-pot for the dining room as to design the house in which it was to be used. This may at first seem far-fetched, but even a pepper-pot can be badly designed. Try your own pepper-pot—is it satisfactory? Is it stable or does it knock over

easily? Do the fingers grasp it comfortably? Does the pepper shoot out too fast, with disastrous results to your palate, or does it trickle out slowly, with unhappy effects upon your temper? All these are essential points of pepper-pot design, and can be intelligently or stupidly solved. Again, is the pepper-pot in harmony with your dining room table? Is it of elaborate shape or covered with ornament which looks pretentious on a simple table, or is it perhaps a simple thing and looks poor and desolate on a heavily carved table? Does the table itself appear quite happy in the dining room? That brings me to rooms proper.

Rooms Which Satisfy

I wonder how often you have entered some strange apartment—either in a public place of entertainment or in the house of a friend—which has pleased you immediately, which has given you by its general atmosphere an invitation to enjoy it, a promise of ease; a room which has, in fact, satisfied without trying to amuse or startle you, which has not demanded any effort on your part to examine it in detail. If you have come across such a room, it might be valuable to examine here the qualities which go to its making. I believe that you will find they are summarised in simplicity, in the directness of function, and in completeness.

It has been advanced as a common argument, 'Yes, that

is all very well, but the chair which I admire in a restaurant may not necessarily be the chair I should admire in my own drawing room'. While admitting that, you must remember that if the chair you admired in the restaurant was so designed as to fulfil the particular function demanded of it in that special place, it has been successful, and you must not expect the same chair to be as appropriate and pleasant in a private dining room. But you must not condemn out of hand a steel tube chair for the dining room because you have seen one in a restaurant. In fact, I assure you that in my own house I have had the great pleasure of convincing such die-hard critics as I speak of now, of the complete comfort and good looks of steel chairs which were designed for my dining room. Shy at first, they sat down and enjoyed its comforts, and many of them have bought similar chairs for themselves. All new things at least deserve a trial.

I think we can safely say that those rooms which satisfy are seen and not heard; that they have repose, and that they lack the screaming discords of unintelligent collecting. They are free from clashing colours, useless trifles and ugly shapes. How are these effects of space and air, cleanliness and light, ease and comfort obtained? They are seldom the result of haphazard effort, but are almost invariably the result of the concentrated knowledge and training of the designer concerned.

If I were to offer advice to a newly-married couple who, having few or no possessions, are starting to furnish a new home, I would particularly stress that they should try to avoid at all costs the manufacturer's suite, entailing, as it usually does, the purchase of things which are relegated from the best bedroom to the second-best bedroom and so on in time to come. Avoid things which become clumsy and obsolete burdens. Rather would I suggest that they concentrate on such essential moveable pieces as chairs and tables, which are impersonal and do not carry some distinguishing mark which makes the complete suite.

Most of us are familiar with the unit book-case and are quite willing to accept it as a very useful principle in furnishing—always complete, yet never finished—but how many of us are willing to accept this principle as being

equally applicable to almost any piece of furniture? I look forward hopefully to the day when there will be the same demand for all types of combination furniture, cheap and mass-produced, in this country as there is on the Continent.

The Designer's Job

Let us for a moment examine the designer's job and the knowledge which is necessary to produce these various things in order to fulfil our demands. We can now say that building and furniture have, firstly, definitely to do a job, which is their only reason for existing, and, secondly, if possible, must look at least pleasant, if not beautiful, in the course of their function.

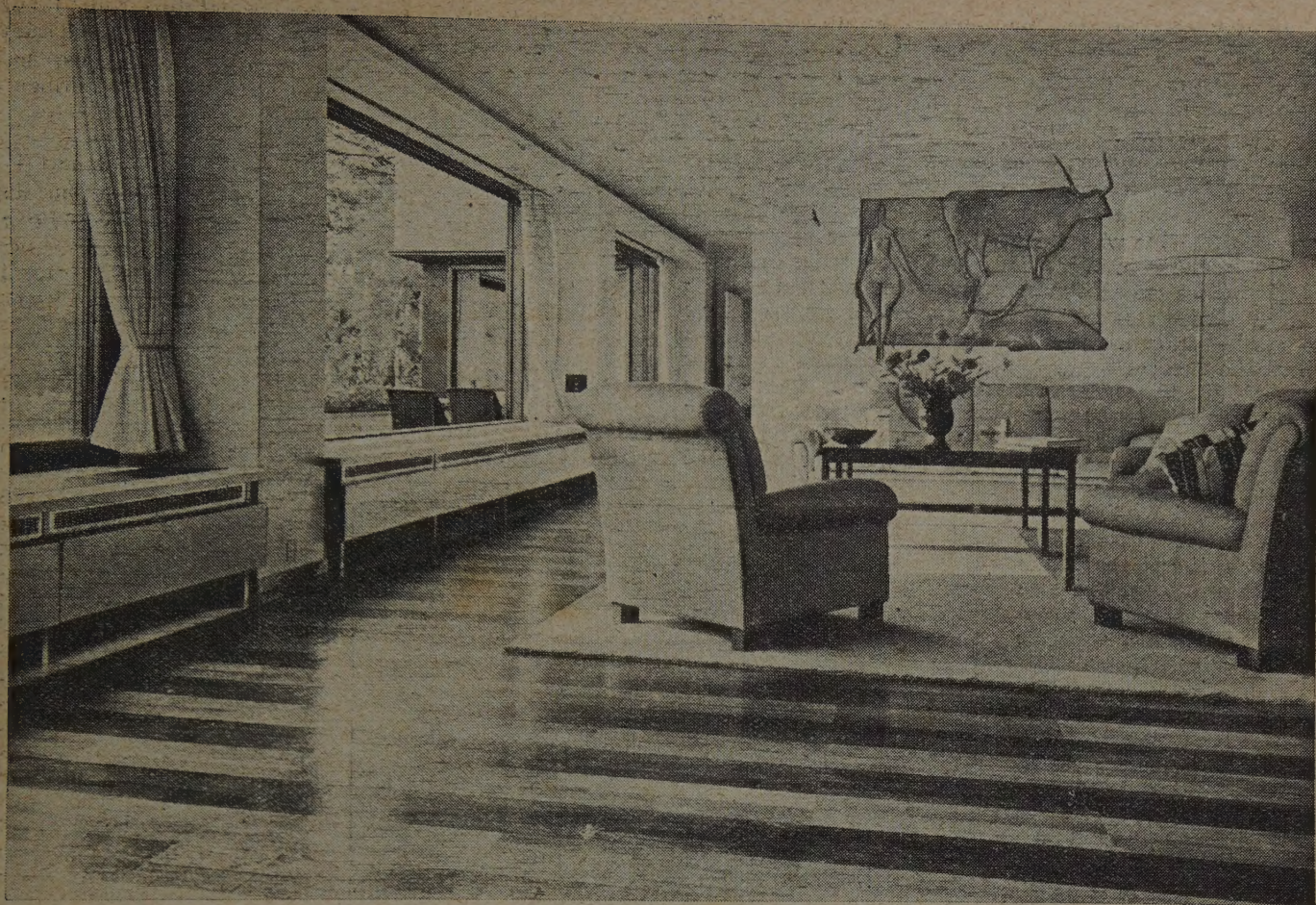
The designer, no matter what his speciality, must fulfil the requirements of all demands made upon him. While having to be a cultured man and technical exponent, he has a third and most important function—that of the selector. It is this quality of selection which is the indefinable one of taste in the artist. There is no problem, however large or small, which has not as a rule more than one solution, and it is important to stress that the successful solutions to any problem are arrived at through the process of solving, and not from any preconceived idea that the whole should conform to this style or another. A choice of the various solutions has to be made. The selector must be a man who understands not only his job but man, for obviously all things are created for man and not for themselves. We all have, or pretend to have, an æsthetic sense. We all react to beauty as well as to convenience. Mr. Aldous Huxley wrote a short time ago that: 'tradition is the next best substitute for talent'. The modern designer, in seeking beautiful forms, has realised that a great many things which he is asked to create to-day are without a precedent. He has also realised that we must live up to the tradition of creation as this was realised by the craftsmen of other days, but it is obviously stupid to be content to copy and adapt where conditions demand entirely new things.

In the course of my own work I have evolved a few maxims to which I rigidly adhere—I will submit them to you for what they are worth. First comes fitness of



These two photographs of a Victorian house, reconstructed by Mr. Wells Coates, have been taken from exactly the same point of view and illustrate admirably the dusty confusion of the old and the spacious cleanliness of the new treatment

By courtesy of 'The Architectural Review'



Simplicity and restfulness in the modern room—an interior designed by Erich Mendelsohn

purpose, that is to say materials are for a purpose and not for an effect. For instance, there is something unsuitable about an entire sideboard in metal merely for effect. It would be logical, however, if the top was made of metal, which does not damage with hot dishes and spilt drinks.

Secondly, form and colour are of a thing and not on it. For example, if you desire to introduce a cheerful note of yellow into your bedroom, have a yellow chest of drawers, but don't paint on a mahogany chest a bunch of yellow daisies or a canary! Buildings and furniture are like ourselves—they have bodies and skins: unlike ourselves, they require no clothes.

Thirdly, meaningless decoration as such is desecration. For example, we are all of us familiar with festoons of plaster vegetables crawling over the walls of buildings, inside and out. We have seen furniture with a Chinese landscape in the middle of an English walnut panel. Yet wood is a lovely thing in itself, and needs no enrichment. All that things like that succeed in doing is to destroy the purity and effect of the thing itself. If buildings and furniture require when finished the addition of ornament, this can only mean their failure in the first place.

Fourthly, simplicity is essential in a scientific age if we are to retain our sanity. When we return home most of us feel pretty well jaded after the rush of our business life, the speed and noise of traffic, the complexity and variety of powerful lights, a medley of signs and colours which we encounter inevitably in our daily lives. We require a direct contrast to this bustle in order to give our nerves a well-earned rest.

Benefits of the Machine

If we were to put these principles into practice we all would eliminate fussy things within our houses. Elaborate, dust-collecting furniture is useless in the new order. Small, simple and hygienic pieces against plain walls of fresh colouring are needed, and few of them. There is no room for things which do not really fulfil some real purpose, in a way which needs least attention and work. These pieces are essentially the product of our machine age. They are mass-produced and should consequently be infinitely cheaper than cheap imitations of the old and costlier things. Designers of furniture, fabrics and fittings in the past were antagonistic to machinery, or shy of it. Machinery was supposed to be at war with craftsmanship. The

result of their attitude was that machinery did without designers and its ghastly products ran amok over the face of the land. Some of these horrors are still to be encountered in various stores. This spuriousness encouraged designers to stage various period revivals and art-and-crafty movements which are all too familiar. All this must come to an end.

Let us examine for a moment the more familiar building materials of this machine age, such as fibre boards, ply-woods, sheet glass, composition and rubber floors, only to mention a few. These things have not the limitations of size of the equivalent products of other times, and require a totally different technique for expressing them. A modern building board half an inch thick will completely deaden the sound of a typewriter the other side of an office partition, where it would require about fourteen inches of brick to give the equivalent result. A wall can be covered to-day in plywood by the lover of panelling with unbroken surfaces with no cover mouldings of obsolete construction to catch the dust. The size of a small room can be apparently doubled by the judicious use of large mirrors. A plain mirror hung on the window wall is a better thing to dress by than a complicated dressing table with mirrors and knobs which are always catching in the curtains. Additional light can be reflected from an easily washable floor of the palest tone, lending airiness and space to the room.

A Flood of Sham Modern

Another obstacle to progress is undoubtedly snobbery. In England to a greater extent than anywhere else, the middle classes copy the rich. When the rich collected antiques, a demand sprang up among their followers for the sham antique. There were obviously not enough genuine ones to go round.

Equally to-day there has appeared a flood of the sham modern. To a large extent this can be explained by the work of conversion, of the so-called modernising of old buildings inside. While such work was restricted to the improvement of sanitation, the building of bathrooms and the introduction of electric light, no great harm was done. Architects with sensibility preserved the completeness of the building as far as possible, with a sense of appropriateness and harmony. But there soon sprang up in the period of post-war

(Continued on page 420)

Travellers in Europe

III—Austria: A Tragedy of Isolation

By J. W. BROWN

THOSE to whom Austria is a familiar country will find certain differences this year. On trains that used to be crowded there is now plenty of room and the dining-cars are often empty. Hotels are no longer crowded—particularly the smaller hotels in remote villages where the German family tourists used to spend the summer holidays. There are few visitors here now. The *Alpen Verein* huts which used to be packed are rarely a quarter full. Only at week-ends and near the towns is their capacity taxed. In the cafés, orchestras have been cut down, and this year in the Café Maria Theresien at Innsbruck there is no Tzigeuner Band. At all places where music is played the tax is now 40 Groschen, and even in Salzburg the musical evenings at the poorer cafés are sparsely attended.

The Viennese himself will lament the passing of brighter days, but Vienna does not wear the crisis on its sleeve. The cafés are still comparatively well attended. This does not mean that the people are spending a lot of money, for they can sit for hours over a cup of coffee, and the coffee is always followed by glasses of fresh water. Their coffee is still the best in the world. At week-ends the people of Vienna still go into the beautiful Wiener Wald—many of the men in shorts and gay coloured jackets. The picnickers go off with just enough food in their rucksacks, and break their journey in the mountains to take a coffee, a glass of wine or a tankard of beer. Everywhere in Austria tourists are welcome. It is one of the few countries where the English are really liked. In my opinion that is because we have something in common with the Austrian people, psychologically and emotionally.

The whole country seems quiet and orderly and very little is heard or seen of the two private armies, the Fascist *Heimwehr* and the Socialist *Shutzbund* which threatened to disrupt Austria a year ago. While travelling in Austria you have a sense of freedom which you get from no other country, except perhaps Holland and the Scandinavian countries. In Austria there is no Five-Year Plan as in Russia. Nor is there any feeling, as in Germany, that if the Versailles Treaty were abolished all would be well. There is no definite plan for regeneration yet; but they are not utterly cast down. A struggle is still made by the poorer people to obtain a university degree or a technical education, and large masses of the people are still cultured enough to play a musical instrument well. It is the material basis of life which is lacking, but their spirit is undaunted; their attitude is summed up in the statement 'In Germany the position is serious, but not hopeless; in Austria it is hopeless, but not serious'.

The tourist in Vienna soon realises that the town is the centre for news, travel, commerce and politics. An added interest is lent by the evident results of twelve years' rule by a Socialist majority. One is immediately struck by the modern aspect of the Viennese workmen's houses. In this respect the

contrast with pre-War days is great. In 1918 three out of every four of the 555,000 dwellings consisted of one or two rooms. In these one window overlooked the street, while the other opened into a corridor and had no direct lighting. Moreover, nine out of every ten had neither independent sanitary accommodation nor a water supply. The rents varied between one-quarter and one-fifth of the tenant's average wages and many families took lodgers to eke out their means. It was not surprising that tuberculosis took its toll in these overcrowded and insanitary premises.

But since 1919 the Socialists have built about 55,000 workmen's dwellings at a cost of some £22,000,000. As the population has decreased from 2,100,000 in 1914 to about 1,853,000 to-day, one Viennese in every ten is now living in a new dwelling. The new buildings are mostly in blocks of several hundred flats, each of which has plenty of light and air. The flats vary from one room to four rooms, and the rents are as low as 1s. to 4s. per week. Each block of flats has a central garden for the children, elaborate kindergartens, communal laundries with the most modern washing, drying and ironing apparatus, and many have communal bathing places. In summer the gardens are filled with flowers and light; air and cleanliness have been brought to the poorest inhabitants. The contrast with the barracks of old Vienna is overwhelming.

Although life in Vienna and in the countryside appears on the surface to be little changed, the many beggars to be seen in the streets are not the only symptoms of the crisis through which Austria is passing. There is a great deal of unemployment. About 600,000 are unemployed—nearly a tenth of the total population. Although unem-

ployment usually diminishes during the summer months, in Vienna alone during the second half of June there were 106,990 unemployed—21,740 more than in June of last year. And there is no sign of a decrease in the provinces.

On the railways, receipts are diminishing month by month. In 1918 there were eighteen journeys per head of the population, while in 1931 there were only fourteen. The middle classes, too, have been hard hit. Many teachers have been dismissed. Officials' salaries have been reduced again and again. No new officials are being appointed, and as the older ones die their places are not always filled. During July the Federation Department of Statistics showed a decline in the economic position in all directions. The reduction in spending capacity consequent on the spread of unemployment and the increase of taxation have taken their toll of the home markets, and foreign trade is rapidly coming to a standstill. Exchange restrictions further hamper foreign trade.

In tracing the fundamental causes of Austria's condition one must, of course, bear in mind her position at the end of the War. When the old Hapsburg Empire was dissolved and the present-day frontiers were drawn Austria was left with twenty-three per cent. of the population of the old Empire, with thirty



Poverty in Austria to-day. A family of fourteen at the midday meal in the one room where all live and sleep together



The amusement that still costs the Viennese nothing—Parade of sunbathers by the Danube Canal

Photograph: Mondiale

per cent. of the industrial workers. Against this the home produce of coal was one-half per cent. of the amount mined in 1914, and poor quality at that. Practically all the coal needed both for household consumption and for industry had to be imported. And it was the same for most of the raw materials required for industry. The food situation was little better. Before the War Austria had produced enough to cover one-fifth of her own needs. But the War had cut down by half the grain-bearing areas. The Alpine districts were a good deal worse off; the cattle on which the people depended had been so reduced that they hardly supported the population, much less yielded a surplus. Even by reducing rations to the bare minimum necessary for existence Austria could only hope to feed herself for a few months in the year.

Meanwhile there was the most expensive Civil Service to maintain. A bureaucracy disproportionately large for the needs of twenty-five millions of men now administered the affairs of barely six millions. Enormous railway termini with large staffs of clerks opened on to stumps of lines only thirty or forty miles long. Most of the middle-class population of Vienna was in much the same position; a head without a body. There were doctors enough to cure, professors enough to make wise half Central Europe, yet they were barricaded off from the people in the surrounding countries. Banks and businesses with wide ramifications were hampered at every turn by the efforts of the Succession States to divert the centre of business and finance from Vienna.

I cannot outline the sequence of events now which led up to the present situation; you know that they came to a head with the failure of the *Credit Anstalt*, which was the beginning of the crises which forced England off the gold standard. The whole business is connected with the *Anschluss*, the idea of a political union between Austria and Germany—an object which is supported by nearly all parties in Austria. Most of the Austrians with whom one talks realise the hopelessness of carrying on with their present economic resources, and with high tariff walls around them the only thing left seems to be to link up with a powerful country like Germany. Remember

that in Austria nearly all the people are of German nationality. The union of these two countries would constitute a big nation which would overshadow not only France and Italy, but Poland and Yugoslavia—while Czechoslovakia would be surrounded on three sides and all its chief trade routes would go through German territory. I need not remind you that the project met with the hostility of France, and, if it were to be persisted in, necessary financial aid would not be forthcoming from France. As a result of this hostility to the *Anschluss* no one has a good word to say for France or, for that matter, for the League of Nations. In certain quarters one hears the desire expressed that Austria might be linked up with Bavaria, or else be the centre of a Danubian Economic Federation. But in either case there is the feeling that France holds the dominant position in international affairs, and there is little hope for the realization of such schemes.

Yet there is no inclination on the part of rival political factions to unite in order to find a way out of the gloom that has encompassed Austria since last May. Instead the rival parties are behaving with less unity than ever. The farmers continue to press for monopolies which, if granted, would embroil the country in serious difficulties with its neighbours and paralyse its export trade. On one side people are clamouring for a dictatorship, while on the other there are those who believe that a solution of the problems is beyond the power of a dictator. Among the young and politically-minded people the Nazi movement is still making progress. Nazi uniforms in the streets, and parades and poster propaganda are conspicuous everywhere. They stress German unity and the evils of the Treaties.

The fears of a Hapsburg reaction have, however, subsided. Economic distress tends to swamp purely political problems. Yet the Austrian himself appears to have no constructive plan for his economic salvation. He goes on with his sun-bathing, which is still the rage, and almost the only amusement which costs him nothing. The outlook for Austria is not at all bright. There is no national plan promising reconstruction in the near

future, and this knowledge affects the outlook of the people. The League of Nations should afford a gleam of hope: but in its latest reports it advises Austria to reduce expenditure on wages at home still more drastically: to deflate more energetically and to force exports. But this cannot cure Austria's ills,

for her troubles have deep-seated causes. Her trouble does not lie only in the world depression with its attendant evils, nor in the tariff walls that have arisen around the newly created states of Southern Europe, but in the isolation of Austria and in her difficulty of supporting herself alone.

IV—France: Work for Progress and Peace

By B. S. TOWNROE

NO traveller in France to-day can fail to recognise what false guides are those who suggest that the French remain untouched by the world troubles. I will try and tell you some personal experiences which may help to show the true position. Lord Tyrrell, our Ambassador in Paris, told some of us not long ago how since the War the world has become more like a village than ever, and events in one nation or family affect all.

We have heard this week how the total receipts on the Nord Railway of France for the first eight months of this year had decreased by 21 per cent., as compared with the corresponding period for last year. This is, of course, largely explained by the diminished number of British travellers. French commercial interests, too, are suffering greatly from the fiscal changes introduced here. The English traveller is reminded of the mutual interests of the two nations at every turn. Possibly at first sight, however, he will think that conditions are better in France than they are here. For example, unemployment in France is not so apparent as it is here. But it exists and is increasing. It must be remembered, however, that France since the War has imported man-power to the extent of three million foreigners. In the mining areas in the North I have seen Polish and Czechoslovakian banks specially founded for the convenience of the Poles and the other foreign miners. Last year when I went down a potash mine in the south of Alsace, I heard much Polish, and even Italian spoken. Across the Pyrenees during the last few years have flowed 400,000 Spaniards, and over the Belgian frontier over half-a-million Belgians. These foreigners were welcomed because of the low birth-rate and the consequent shortage of labour. But to-day when times are bad, those foreigners who have not become assimilated are returning home, and their jobs are being taken by Frenchmen. This is one reason why the unemployment figures are a little misleading.

On all sides the traveller will notice signs of the under-population of France. In some parts I have journeyed for miles without seeing a single living person. Whereas the British population to the square mile is one of the most congested in the world, France needs more babies, and indeed, of those who are born, too many die before they are twelve months old. Miss Cicely Hamilton told you how the cult of the cradle is encouraged in Italy. In France, too, tremendous efforts are being made to encourage larger families and to decrease infantile mortality.

Let me tell you of one experiment to breed a better race. This is at a Garden City, known as *Les Jardins Ungemach*, built some years ago on the site of the old German fortifications outside Strasbourg. When Alsace was recovered by France, a local confectionery firm decided to make a special effort to help solve the birth-rate problem. They had made profits amounting to 2,400,000 gold marks, by selling sweets to German soldiers. The Directors decided that these profits ought to be returned to the community, and founded a Housing Trust of a peculiar kind. Monsieur Dachert, one of the directors, explained to me how the experiment was inspired by a study of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and also by visits paid to Port Sunlight, Bournville and elsewhere in England. The main object is to enable stronger and better children to be brought up in Strasbourg.

There are now 140 houses built, each specially planned with only one floor so as to enable a young wife to avoid all undue strain or labour. The dwellings are mainly detached bungalows, very different from the enormous communal flats in Vienna which Mr. Brown has described. The French are individualists. They like to live in separate homes where possible, and to cultivate their own plot of ground. Each of these Strasbourg houses has its own garden; water laid on in all the bedrooms; and electric light. The rent is about 5s. a week, and only young couples in the best of health, who really want children, are selected as tenants. A committee visits the homes where they live when they apply for a tenancy, to find out whether they are kept tidy and clean. If accepted, and if, after a year or so of marriage, no baby appears, they have to leave. Monsieur Dachert told me that in eight years only nine families had left because they had not fulfilled this condition. There have been no epidemics of fever, and the police have never been called in at all to this paradise for young parents.

There are many other garden cities in various parts of France, although the conditions about babies are not so drastic. Dr. Delisle Burns, talking about Germany, referred rather scathingly to the pale and overclothed children of France. I wish you and he could come with me and see the bonny children who live on the housing estates built by the Nord Railway, and who spend

many weeks at the holiday homes on the coast run for the benefit of the children of the railwaymen. Colliery proprietors, shipbuilders and captains of other industries have built similar housing estates where the residents are rosy in complexion and have learnt, possibly better than some of our own fellow-countrymen, the folly of over-clothing. The mothers in these new French towns are taught modern ideas of fresh air and hygiene, and receive free advice at the various centres, where sterilised milk in bottles is sold at cost price. Crèches are run by staffs of trained nurses, or in some cases, as in a mining village at Anzin, I found nuns in charge of all the maternity and child welfare work.

The schools have vast windows which slide on one side in fine weather, and my wife and I were impressed by the practical character of the training given. This summer we saw a number of girls, aged from eight to fifteen, being taught simple cooking, how to keep family accounts, laundry work, sewing and mending. At the age of fourteen they begin to make their trousseaux, and the linen needed for their future homes. The boys, too, are taught craftsmanship in various trades. The management of these garden cities is very democratic, and everything possible is done to avoid sapping the independence of the parents, and to encourage good use of leisure time. If Dr. Burns ever has time to visit some of these new French housing estates, he should take off his hat to the progressive leaders of post-War French industry.

In spite of the economic crisis, this social movement is being steadily pressed forward, but last July Monsieur Nitot, who took me over the new town of Le Trait, inhabited by shipbuilders, told me that the rate of progress is unfortunately being slowed down. For the French are travelling along a hard road. There is a good deal of nervousness about the future. The price of living is going up. Many are spending as little as possible, and this is naturally harming the shopkeepers. The French Budget is unbalanced, and the plans for the conversion of Government loans were only placed before an emergency session of the Chamber of Deputies on Friday last. I found on my recent visit to France that the average Frenchman admires us immensely for the way we paid up our taxes so as to balance our Budget, and for our successful War Loan Conversion.

There are many developments taking place which are creating a more mutual understanding between the French and other nations. I have watched during the last few years the growth of the Cité Universitaire in Paris, where hostels have been built for American, Canadian, Japanese, Argentine, Dutch, Belgian, Indo-Chinese and students from other nations. Plans are now being prepared for a Franco-British house where French and British students will be able to obtain good board and lodging, each with his or her bed-sitting room, for probably about 1,000 francs a month. At the British Institute in Paris, which is supported by all the British Universities, French and British students have been working together for some years past. There are also exchanges regularly every year of French and English professors and students, and it is a pity that these are not yet as general as the exchanges with certain other continental countries.

The younger generation are amazingly good at English. Last July I spoke in English to a large number of boys at the *Lycée Condorcet* in Paris, the school where Monsieur Tardieu and other French Ministers were educated, and was much impressed by the way every word was apparently understood. Afterwards some of the boys told me that they were regular readers of *The Boys' Own Paper*.

France is, in fact, to-day undergoing a real transformation. A revolution is taking place in her industrial and commercial thought and methods. For example, I was invited to lunch in the dining-room attached to a large colliery, at which there were present a number of directors. On such an occasion in England the conversation almost inevitably runs on shooting, hunting or golf, for 'shop' is usually taboo. But at this French lunch the directors were all discussing technical matters chiefly in terms of chemistry and physics, dealing with the application of science to the coal industry and the best possible use of by-products. They enjoyed an exceedingly good lunch, to which they did full justice with all the Frenchman's love of first-class cooking, but at the same time they did not waste a minute and talked 'shop' the whole time.

I came across another example of modern French business methods in Beauvais, and I shall never forget it. I was on holiday, but being extremely interested in the manufacture of the foreign tiles which are used on the roofs of so many English houses, I armed myself with an introduction to the managing director of a well-known brick and tile company at Beauvais. Waking early

one morning I was out in the streets soon after 7, and by accident passed the head office of the company. To my surprise the door was already open. So I entered and asked that my letter of introduction should be given to the managing director on his arrival. The girl at the enquiry counter looked at me rather pityingly for my ignorance, and replied: 'Oh, but he is already here!' I was at once shown upstairs into his office and he told me that he always came at 7 a.m., dealt with his correspondence immediately, and was then quite free to see members of his staff and customers during the morning. He had lunch from midday till two o'clock, often entertaining business friends. He spent the afternoon in the factories which lie outside the town, and returned to his office between six and seven to sign the letters which he had dictated at a time when most English business men would be just getting out of bed. I am also impressed by the way educated French men and women are talking about French colonial policy. The Colonial Exhibition in Paris last year showed visitors something of the potential strength of these colonies with their 47,000,000 inhabitants; the new pioneer outlook and the desire to spread French civilisation and culture in North, West and Equatorial Africa; in the Cameroons; in Indo-China and elsewhere. The future direction of French colonial policy is of immense importance to the world, and especially to the British Commonwealth of Nations. For if we can work together and share each other's experiences, it will be to the advantage of millions of people—black, yellow and white.

France is, of course, experiencing growing pains, due to these developments. She is further suffering from enforced economies and diminished incomes, but she has many unassailable assets. The industry of her people is almost incredible. The market gardeners, for example, whom I have seen growing lettuces, artichokes, onions and leeks among the streams of the River Somme, during the summer often start work at two in the morning, and do not leave until nine in the evening, when it is too dark to see any longer.

The thrift, too, of the people is proverbial. The French housewife uses crusts, vegetables and odd scraps of meat which would be thrown away here, to make the soup which is the national dish of the workman. Bread is eaten far more freely in France than anywhere else in Europe. Indeed it has been said that one can always pick out a Frenchman, because he wears a decoration in his buttonhole, and asks three times for bread!

The backbone of France is, of course, the peasant. It is a Peasant State, and has not endangered its life by the industrialism, which is making the British situation so grave to-day. Over 2,000,000 Frenchmen each own and farm less than 2½ acres of land. Personally, when I was travelling a few months ago in the south of the Juras, I missed the flowers of the English village, but the French peasant has little time for flowers, and except on Sundays, little regard to outward appearances. There are, altogether, over eight million separate landowners in France, practically all of whom spend the whole of the hours of daylight working on the soil. The women work in the fields as

well as in the house, and the smallest children guard the cows. There has, of course, been an exodus from the rural districts to the larger towns with their attractions of cinemas and a gayer life, but the majority of town dwellers have still close connections with the country, and many return for three months during the summer to their native villages, probably to visit their grandparents.

Country sports, such as shooting and fishing, are enjoyed by all classes. The farmer, the village postman, the local store-keeper, may all be seen on a Sunday, shooting with their dogs. Football, too, is widely played and enjoys the special supervision of the Under-Secretary for Physical Education and Sports. In the South my sympathies are with the referee, for the enthusiasm of the players sometimes makes the game almost as dangerous to him as if he were in the arena at a bull-fight.

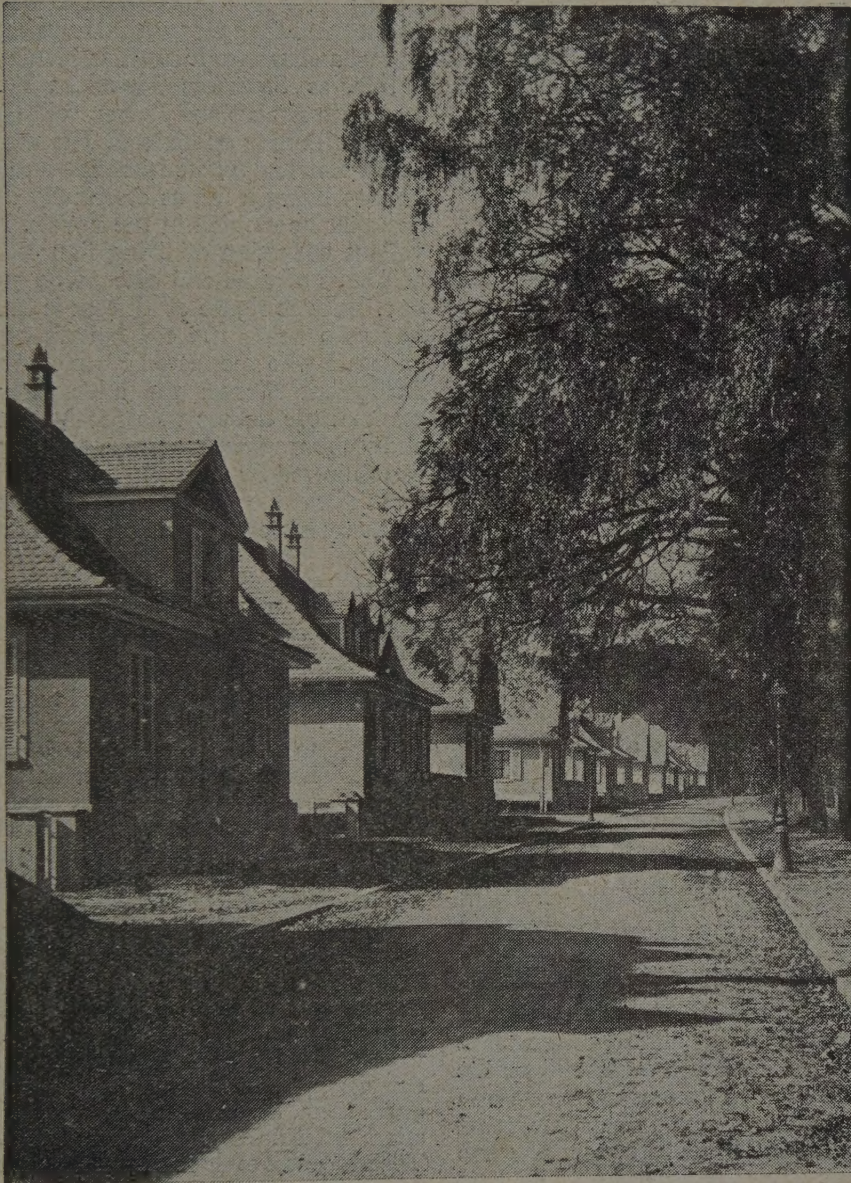
In the towns there are all kinds of athletic clubs, boating, fishing, tennis, cycling, and boxing clubs. We know something in this country of the skill of the French at tennis and golf. The French are bicycle-minded, thus combining transport and fresh air. Their light motor-cycles are tax free. Many a village curé visits his flocks on a motor-cycle. This cult of sport is helping to produce a new France. To-day the younger generation are taller and broader than their parents, both in town and country.

All these factors make for stability. Stories about France being militarist must appear to be nonsense to anyone who meets the ordinary French man and woman, whose sole desire to-day is to be left in peace and security. They remember too well the horrors of War and the damage done to their most cherished soil by the invaders. In every family there are empty chairs to-day. You will understand, therefore, why they find it difficult to forget the past, and why they are scared when they hear the swords rattling again in their scabbards on the other side of the Rhine.

A new Europe cannot be created in the twinkling of an eye,

but there is much going on to create more confidence. I recently visited the work now being carried out at Kembs on the Rhine, where the river rushes down from the Alps, and is being harnessed so as to produce an average electrical power of 120,000 h.p., which will be distributed from the Vosges to Paris. I saw French and German workmen constructing the huge dams across the river, and co-operating in this work of peace. Last year at the University of Strasbourg I learned something of the methods, adopted on the initiative of M. Charléty, now Rector of the University of Paris, to teach students drawn from all parts of the world the best in both French and German culture.

Monsieur Herriot in a recent speech well summarised the French desire to live at peace, and proved that the path of reconciliation in Europe is always open. It is impossible, to do more here than select a few impressions, but I hope that I have said enough to show something of the post-War France which I believe, with its roots in the soil, is a barrier against revolution, and the citizens of which are sincerely anxious to work with us and other nations 'in the linked and steadfast guard set for peace on earth'.



A road in the 'Paradise for Parents', Les Jardins Ungemach at Strasbourg



The Listener

All communications should be addressed to the Editor of THE LISTENER, Broadcasting House, London, W.I. The articles in THE LISTENER being mainly reprints of broadcast talks, original contributions are not invited. Articles in THE LISTENER do not necessarily represent the views of the B.B.C.

A Century of Scott

PEOPLE with a taste for the ironical will find a great deal to entertain them in comparing the Scott centenary celebrations this week with their subject's own opinion of his merits. 'What is the value of a reputation', he asked James Ballantyne, 'which probably will not last above one or two generations?'—and a century later his reputation stands high enough for a baronetcy to be conferred on his great-great-grandson who owns his Abbotsford. 'Papa says there's nothing so bad for young girls as reading bad poetry', remarked Miss Sophia Scott in 1810, explaining why she has not read 'The Lady of the Lake': to-day the tourists in increasing numbers every year piously visit the Trossachs whose beauties Scott revealed in that bad poetry. 'I am sensible that if there be anything good about my poetry, or prose either, it is a hurried frankness of composition which pleases soldiers, sailors and young people of bold and active disposition', he wrote in his Journal in June, 1826; and in September, 1932, professors and critics and other persons not professionally bold and active are busily occupied in editing his letters, writing his life, and analysing his novels. (Three of their products are reviewed on another page.)

Now whose verdict, we may well ask ourselves in this centenary year, are we to accept—Scott's own, or that of the thousands who are remembering and honouring him now? Who is right as to his reputation—himself, or the four writers on other pages of this issue who believe him to be among the world's great creators? The answer is that both in a sense are right. What Scott so clearly saw was that the surface popularity of his work could not last, that the literary fashions in which he dressed up his novels would be pretty soon out of date. But what Colonel Buchan and the others who write in this issue see is that when all this surface Scott is stripped away there remains a solid and enduring mass, which depends no more on the literary fashions of the 1820's than it does on those of to-day. We can cheerfully throw overboard all that there is in him of German romanticism, of Gothic mystery, of mock mediævalism, all the 'tushery' of the historical novels, all that makes him a school book and a holiday task (Scott's worst novels are always the favourites of the examiners)—and we are left face to face with the interpreter of universal characters and emotions. And how great a creator he is we shall never realise until we are willing to discard all that is in him of conventional and local. No writer needed less to be praised for the wrong reasons than Scott.

But when we have finished appraising him as critics

there still remains the great reason why, when we talk of him and write of him, we find it difficult to do so with impartiality and detachment. For there is something miraculous in the fact that the man who shares with Shakespeare ('The blockheads talk of my being like Shakespeare—not fit to tie his brogues', wrote Scott) and the great classics a perfect detachment from his creations—never compelling us to view them through the filter of his consciousness but standing back and letting us look all round them—should at the same time be the man whom we know better than any other novelist, who is revealed magnificently from the outside by Lockhart and from the inside in his own Journal. He creates characters who have such reality and independence that we know far more about them than we are told in print—and he stands there as real a character himself as Jeanie Deans, as Wandering Willie, as Saunders Mucklebackit. Hazlitt, comparing him with Moore and Byron, said that Scott's success lay in not thinking of himself. His whole powers were profusely flowing *outside* himself—and yet at the same time he was living a life as essentially dramatic and tragic as any that he created in the novels. He has left us a marvellous collection of living figures, who owe nothing to accidents of time and place, who are essentially alive to-day. But the figure of all that is best remembered is the boy who heard the old ballads on a Border farm: the advocate who meditated his plots during long sittings in Parliament House: the adventurer who gambled and crashed: the debtor who repaid, with a Calvinistic pride and stubbornness, every penny he owed: the sick man who was followed by the good wishes of half Europe when he went abroad on his last journey, and who came back to die by his own riverside, a hundred years ago to-day.

Week by Week

THE disappearance and rescue of the Flying Family last week affords a good example of the distinction to be drawn between legitimate adventure and foolhardiness that cannot be too strongly condemned. All explorers and pioneers run some risk which is outside their control, but it seems to us, first that this risk should only be faced by those who know precisely what they are in for: second, that it can be only justified when the adventurers have made sure that the minimum has been left to chance, that everything possible in the way of preparation and precaution has been done: and finally, that the risk must be made entirely their own, and not likely to involve any who did not deliberately choose it. Now the Hutchinson exploit comes out badly on all these three counts. First, two small children were included in the party, certainly not of an age to estimate the dangers they were incurring and to come to a rational decision about them. Second—and most glaring—all possible preparations had definitely not been made. They had not enough fuel. Their idea was to fly from America to Scotland by Greenland, and they must have anticipated the possibility of landing there—but they never tried to get the necessary permission from the Danish Government to do so. It looked at one time as if they would have to spend the winter on Greenland (another foreseeable contingency), but having no food supplies themselves, they would then have had to make serious demands on the limited stock of the colonists at Angmagssalik. And finally, their rescue has involved hazards not only on the part of several trawlers, but also (ironically) on that of the members of two expeditions that were properly equipped for their job—Lieutenant Rasmussen of a Danish exploration party, and Chapman and Riley of the Watkins expedition. The Flying Family exploit depended entirely on luck—with luck, Mr. Hutchinson would now be looking forward to lecturing Americans all through the winter (illustrated with lantern slides) on the easiest way to Europe; without luck, and without proper precautions, he and his party are a nuisance. In their anxiety to make a stunt of the Arctic air route they cut out all the essential stages of preparation—stages which the Watkins' expedition are so splendidly

building up. There is not the least doubt that the ultimate credit for the establishment of the route will go to those who have prepared for it thoroughly and scientifically step by step, and not to those who lightheartedly set out to transport two small children along an airway not yet tested for experienced pilots.

* * *

The Building Exhibition at Olympia, which was opened by Mr. W. Ormsby Gore on September 14 provides, in company with the recently opened Building Centre in Bond Street, excellent practical examples of the use of modern materials for those who are considering carrying out some of the suggestions put forward by Mr. Chermayeff and Mr. Nash in other parts of this issue. At Olympia, where manufacturers have considerable space at their disposal, it has been possible to show the use of modern materials in terms of the decoration of whole rooms and in the construction of complete houses, a lavishness which is of course impossible in the limited space available at the Building Centre. The Centre too, according to Mr. Nash, suffers from the overcrowding of different materials, which make it an aesthetic nightmare: Olympia, by the very size of the stands, which allow a large space for each individual material, is free from this defect. Here, however, the advantage of Olympia ends: for the visitor who wishes to examine the most up-to-date materials, with a view to comparing their relative values for his purpose, is sorely perplexed. He wishes, for instance, to see some examples of building bricks, which are produced in such attractive variety nowadays. He will probably turn to the index at the end of his catalogue where he will find the names of some thirty brick-making firms and their pages in the catalogue (not the numbers of their stands). Having discovered these firms in the catalogue he will find that they are dotted about, according presumably to the amount the exhibitor was ready to pay for his space, in the Grand Hall, the National Hall, the Annexe and in the case of some products the Gallery, entailing in each case a considerable journey across the building. The effort in discriminating between materials under these circumstances is doubled; a little 'zoning' might, in fact, be done to advantage at the Building Exhibition. This is not to suggest, however, that the individual stalls are lacking in organisation. The visitor may make a most interesting tour of the exhibits, merely looking at the stands which attract him, and see many examples of first-rate practical craftsmanship: many of these show a welcome evidence of a new understanding of what the designer can do when he works in conjunction with the machine.

* * *

There is, however, one section at Olympia to which unqualified praise can be given, and that is the 'New Homes for Old' exhibition which is undoubtedly one of the most effective pieces of propaganda against existing slum conditions and for proper planning that we have yet seen. First of all it begins with the horrors that actually exist. There is an exact model of a one-room home in London used for living, cooking and sleeping by a family of six. There is a 'chamber of horrors' illustrating the vermin and bugs entrenched in thousands of old houses. There are charts and photographs illustrating overcrowding, the proportion of rents to wages, the diseases which are largely attributable to bad housing conditions, etc. Then come examples of the work of reconditioning carried out under recent housing acts, showing how the most unpromising slum property has been improved out of all knowledge at comparatively small cost, how de-licensed public houses have been turned into flats, how gardens have been made out of back yards and waste spaces. Entirely new buildings intended to house those who formerly lived in slums are also well illustrated, and there is a very good group of photographs showing cottage estates outside London where each family lives in a self-contained cottage with a garden of its own, and big blocks of flats which give adequate open space for light and air, health and communal recreation. But the most remarkable exhibit in this section is probably the model flat designed by two women architects. It is intended for a family of parents and five children, allowing separate bedrooms for boys, girls, and parents, and would have the low rent (for London) of 10s. a week. The architects have also designed furniture suitable for this flat which could be made by anyone able to use simple tools. This furniture is as simple and functional as one could well wish, and might be

studied even by those who can afford to pay much more for their articles. There is no unnecessary decoration: the cupboards, wardrobes, etc., are low so that they can be easily kept free of dust. It has been calculated that the whole furnishing, including bedding and crockery, could be bought or made for a maximum of £35, which compares favourably with the sum normally expended by a workman's family. This exhibition—which is entirely the work of voluntary housing societies in London—will, at the end of the present show at Olympia on September 28, be available for use on loan, and housing societies in other parts of the country would do well to take advantage of this offer.

* * *

The figures given by the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health in his recently published *Annual Report**, show that once again our 'expectation of life' has increased. We are, it seems, justified in expecting to live fifteen years or so longer than our grandparents could safely anticipate. The statisticians who call upon us to rejoice accordingly must feel somewhat aggrieved at the recent remarks of a centenarian, who declared that he would have preferred to die at eighty and leave the world to be run by the younger and more capable generation. The odd twenty years he regarded rather as a burden than a blessing, thus entirely upsetting the accepted order of things, when those who attain a hundredth birthday are invited to provide the public with their 'recipe' for a long life. It may be true that we no longer necessarily feel elated at an announcement that we may expect to live longer. It is certainly true that the extra years of life are unlikely to be spent in active work. Indeed, it is being realised that an early retiring age is an economic necessity, and that as newer and simplified inventions appear, to increase our output of commodities from machines which can be worked by less and less human labour, the necessity is likely to become even more urgent. So we are brought once more to the problem of making the best and most profitable use of the leisure time that is forced upon us. Sir Alfred Ewing spoke recently of the danger of acquiring mechanical power without attaining a corresponding wisdom to direct our use of it. It would be equally disastrous to acquire a longer lease of life without sufficient resources to occupy it intelligently and profitably.

* * *

The recent 'Flags on the Matterhorn' was a very good example of the action type of radio play. It was concerned with certain definite events in time and place, and these events were made actual for the listener in the way the Derby and the Boat Race are made actual by a running commentary. But that radio drama is also capable of the other extreme, and can make a successful play out of ideas as well as out of facts, is proved by such productions as Mr. E. J. King-Bull's 'Precession', which is due on September 26 (National) and 28 (London Regional). Here is, apparently, a curious medley—beginning with an old man explaining his Punch and Judy show to his son, then shading off into a dialogue on Olympus between Jupiter and Pan, culminating in Pan's ejection from heaven, then back again to the showman and his Punch. Now for the listener who accepts his plays at their surface value, there will be entertainment in plenty. There is the Punch and Judy show with Old Nick fetching Punch a beauty on the back of the boko—there are gods on Olympus standing each other double nectars, confessing in their cups to their personal likes and foibles, discussing the better government of the heavens, listening-in to the result of the Trojan War. To hear a god speak slang is always good fun, and there is here plenty of this particular kind of fun. But for those who dig deeper into the play there is a lot more to be found. To them the creatures of the play are simply symbols for perfectly timeless and spaceless ideas. Here on the one hand is Punch—or Jupiter—the steady man, the unimaginative man, who stands for things as they are. Here, on the other, is Old Nick, doer-down of Punch, alias Pan, upsetter of Jupiter's dignity—he is the eternal revolutionary, the uncertain factor, who cannot be really pigeon-holed into any established institution, heavenly or earthly, and has indeed to be cast out of Olympus. The constant opposition of these two ideas is a theme that is never out of date. By externalising it, in such a way that the contrast is made audible in words and music, the producer has shown that wireless is capable of giving new life to a very old myth.

* H.M. Stationery Office. 4s.

*The Way of the World**'Back to Asia'*

By VERNON BARTLETT

ALMOST exactly a year ago troops from the Japanese zone on each side of the South Manchurian Railway, reinforced by others who were rushed across the frontier from Korea, suddenly occupied strategic points in Mukden and other Manchurian cities. It has since been pretty widely reported that the incident which was given as the reason for this action—the destruction by Chinese soldiers of a few yards of the Japanese-owned South Manchurian Railway—was only an excuse for carrying out a prearranged plan. But on that I express no opinion since, in a few weeks, we shall have the report of the Lytton Commission, which was sent by the League to investigate the whole business, and this report will doubtless throw light on that and all previous incidents which had made relations between Japan and China so bitter. Those of us who insisted a year ago that this dispute was a serious matter in which vital British interests were involved got ourselves into considerable trouble. Either the Japanese meant what they said when they declared they would withdraw their troops in a few weeks as soon as the safety of the nationals had been assured—in which case it was unfair to express doubts as to whether they would be able to do so—or the Japanese were only doing what other people had done in the process of building up a big empire—in which case we lived in a glasshouse and should not throw stones. Well, a year has gone by and nobody expects that, even with the recognition of the Manchukuo state by Japan, the dispute is anywhere near solution, and that is because of certain factors which make it unlike previous attempts of an industrialist nation to develop backward areas in foreign territory. For one thing, since any previous attempt on a large scale, both the League Covenant and the Paris Peace Pact have been drafted in order to prevent that sort of thing, and the territory of China was supposed to be additionally protected by a special Nine-Power Treaty, signed by Japan and other nations in Washington ten years ago.

The fact that the fever of nationalism is now overtaking so vast a country as China, where it has led to chronic disorder ever since the overthrow of the imperial dynasty in 1911, is one of the reasons why it has become dangerous for any other nation to expect to get its own way by force on Chinese territory. The more China 'goes nationalist', the less likely she is to indulge in further civil war, and the more likely to turn 'anti-foreign'. If the present fairly moderate government in Nanking were to be overthrown it would be followed by a much less moderate one, and it is significant that ministers who hitherto have concentrated all their hopes on modernising their country with the help of European experts sent out by the League are now talking about adopting the European system of military conscription so that they can fend for themselves.

The situation in Japan is strikingly different but even more interesting. It is quite possible, I suppose, that in the next fifty years China will go through the too-hurried attempt to 'westernise' herself which Japan has made during the last fifty, although there is not in China the rigid imperial tradition which makes Japan a country of such immense and dangerous contrasts. Perhaps no other country, certainly no other Great Power, has been quite so cruelly hit by the economic crisis as Japan. In some ways Russia may be in a worse state, but the Russians can always put the blame on capitalism. Germany also has had, and is having, a very bad time of it, and it is interesting to notice how similar are the developments and the reactions to them in these two countries, Germany and Japan. Both decided, in the second half of the last century, in favour of ruthless economic expansion. There had to be a complete change of values. Goethe, Schiller, Beethoven, Wagner, and the others who had been the glories of Germany became less important than the great industrialists. The same sort of thing has been happening in Japan. Now, in both countries, there is a dangerously sudden conviction that materialism is not enough.

In Japan the old traditions built round the Imperial throne and the army have steadily lost ground to big business, and the two greatest firms in the country were the powers behind the two great political parties. The Government had no direct power over the army and navy and the ministers at the head of these two service departments did not resign when the rest of the Cabinet resigned. But it is safe to suggest that if there had been no economic slump the power of the army would have been more and more curtailed, since military adventures were so obviously dangerous to the development of Japanese trade with other nations. But, as we all know to our cost, there has been the economic slump, following, in the case of Japan, far too closely at the heels of a disastrous earthquake and a disastrous banking crisis. People found suddenly that western business methods could not save even the western powers from a devas-

tating fall of prices, and that they could not prevent famine conditions over vast areas of Japan. The parliamentary system there has worked no better than it has in Germany, and in both countries semi-secret military organisations began to grow up, with no very definite ideas beyond a dislike of internationalism, whether it was good for trade or not, and a desire for the return of lost military glories. The army in Japan has wanted for a generation or more to gain control over Manchuria and probably a good deal more of China besides. Although more than nine-tenths of all Japanese investments abroad are in China, the suffering caused by the economic crisis had robbed the more moderate politicians of their influence. When the Manchurian crisis broke they could not check it. Some people argue that a stronger line taken at the very beginning by the other nations in defence of the different treaties guaranteeing Chinese territory would have enabled the moderate government then in office to break the power of the army in Japanese politics once and for all. That may or may not have been the case, but at all events the moderate government has had to give way to one in which General Araki, the Minister of War, is the controlling element.

I do not think it is generally realised how serious the economic position of Japan has become. According to official reports the rice harvest last year only reached 40 per cent. of the normal harvest, and this at a time when prices have fallen so disastrously that they are lower than the actual cost of production. Raw silk, the other great product of Japan, is only selling for about one half of the amount it costs to produce. A result of this is that the peasants, who still form the great majority of the population, are terribly in debt. The interest on their debts is said to amount very nearly to the total annual value, at present prices, of the agricultural production of Japan. Those of us who go abroad find that our pound sterling is not worth as much as we should like it to be, but the Japanese yen has fallen so much that, even when compared with our own devaluated pound, it has lost nearly half its value. The gold reserve of the country has sunk so low that at the beginning of the present year it was not much more than twice the interest and sinking fund due this year on foreign loans. And now the taxpayer has to find heavy additional sums to fight the famine at home and the Chinese in Manchuria.

In these circumstances it is not very astonishing that a 'Back to Asia' movement is rapidly developing, the object of which, in the words of one of its principal leaders, would be 'to part company with the materialistic civilisation we have followed for the last sixty years, to return to our own spiritual life, and to seek to preserve Asia in accordance with our own culture. Our present plight is due to our surrender to Western civilisation. The recognition of Manchukuo is the first step of our new mission'. And it is also not surprising that the other members of the League are wondering a little unhappily what they are going to do when the Lytton Commission's report is published, since, although it may make proposals for some measure of international control in Manchuria to protect Japanese and other foreign interests there, it is difficult to believe such proposals will satisfy Japan, so anxious, like the Nazis in Germany, to make their country self-sufficient and self-supporting. The most striking feature about this Japanese movement is the way in which, again like the Nazi movement in Germany, it combines a violent and military form of nationalism with a form of state communism. As one able American writer put it a few weeks ago, 'the Japanese Empire presents a spectacle that is unique. It is by no means impossible that something entirely new in politics is being prepared there—the birth of an imperial-socialist state, a communistic militarism, an anti-capitalist Japan'.

Such, I think, are a few of the issues behind the Sino-Japanese crisis, and they are not going to be solved without having big effects on other countries. The Japanese themselves now say it may take anything from three to ten years before they can restore order in Manchuria, and Chinese Nationalists claim that they can make things very disagreeable for the Japanese for a far longer period. If the Japanese 'Back to Asia' movement were to succeed, Great Britain and other Western Powers would obviously come off very badly in the Far East; if the Chinese policy of resistance were to prove too great an economic strain for Japan to bear, we should also have little to rejoice about, for the Chinese would feel we had left her, despite our treaty obligations, to fight her own battles. And yet how can we best interfere to restore peace and our own trade? That is a problem which is probably just as important as the German claim to re-arm unless all the rest of us disarm, and it is, unfortunately, very much more difficult to solve even with the best will to do so.

With the Greenland Eskimos

By MARTIN LINDSAY

Mr. Lindsay was a member of last year's Arctic Air Route Expedition and spent a year in an Eskimo Settlement in East Greenland

THE Eskimo of the East coast of Greenland is quite a delightful person. It is hard to believe that there can be another race in the world so utterly lacking in all forms of human imperfection. In all probability this is directly the result of the community existence. Living as they do—the whole settlement in one dwelling for mutual warmth—life would be unbearable were not every man in love and charity with his neighbour. Every act in the day of an Eskimo is one by which all the others in the brotherhood receive some benefit, and it is quite impossible for anyone to do anything by which he scores at the expense of another.

The houses are usually placed on a small island in a good sealing locality. Built of boulders and sod, and in size roughly half that of a tennis court, each one is the home of about a dozen complete families, forty or fifty people. Each family has a space allotted to it on a shelf raised three feet off the ground. There are no partitions between families but an occasional post of driftwood supporting the roof marks their boundaries. The entrance is a narrow tunnel below the general level of the floor, which is roughly paved with flat rocks. Each housewife has a blubber lamp in front of her, and the cooking pots hang over it tied with a sealskin line from the roof. As the flame heats each 'dixie' is no more than about six candle power, the meat stews over it all day and is deliciously tender in consequence.

Orderly Muddle

On entering one of these houses for the first time one is struck by the muddle in which everything appears to be. From the roof are hanging rifles and line, ski and harpoons, pots and pans, skins in the various processes of being cured; in fact, every manner of thing. On the floor and under the raised shelf lies a miscellaneous collection of skins, boxes, and more pots and pans. But it is most certainly an orderly muddle, with a place for everything and everything in its place. There is no flabbiness or shoddiness about these people, or in the lives that they live. Everything that they make, from their *kayaks* (canoes manufactured out of sealskin, bone and pieces of driftwood) to their gloves and shoes, is in itself a perfect piece of workmanship and could not be bettered by any of the accomplished processes of modern science. Were they not hardy, enterprising and superlatively efficient in their crafts, the Eskimos could hardly survive the manifold dangers of a life won by hunting on the face of the deep. Every day for them is a gamble with Providence holding the bank. As it is, the mortality among men is high, and there is hardly one among them who, in a missing finger joint from a burst gunbarrel or a wrist badly scarred by frost-bite, does not bear on his body some mark of the hazardous life that he lives.

Within his limitations, what the Eskimo can do is unique. He can find his way where no marks are visible. He estimates time with astounding reliability, not merely by the position of the sun, which is not always there, but by instinct. The stars tell him the progress of the dark season. His knowledge is complete of all the animals than can be captured, of their migrations or the times of their appearance and disappearance, the routes chosen by them on land and on the ice or in the sea, and equally complete is his knowledge of every detail of their anatomy.

The Inispensable Seal

It is a matter of wonder whether these happy-go-lucky folk realise how utterly lost they will be if there is ever a dearth of seals. Without the seal they cannot exist; with it they have all they stand in need of. Its flesh and blood furnish them with food; its skin with clothes, boats and tents; its blubber with light

and fire; its entrails with underclothing, windows, curtains and line; and its bones serve to tip their darts and harpoons, and shoe the runners of their sledges. The meat is usually boiled, but Eskimos frequently eat it frozen or sun-dried. When it is dried it tastes and smells exactly like cheese. One is normally rather suspicious of meat tasting like cheese, but actually, even to our sophisticated palates, it is quite a delicacy.

When a seal is dragged through the tunnel into the dwelling it is cut up, if it is only a small fjord seal, by one or two of the women and nobody else takes much notice; but when it is an eight-foot bearded seal, everyone in the house crowds round and hacks bits off. The infants cry to be put down and then crawl

between the legs of their elders, at all costs to stick a tiny hand into the gory mess. When a particularly tough piece is being dealt with, an Eskimo puts the odd end into his mouth and pulls with his teeth as well as his hands. Between each tug he takes a chew at it. As they cut they eat. The fact that it is raw and frozen is not of the slightest consequence.

The men spend the day hunting and making or improving their tools. The women confine themselves to bearing children, cooking and sewing. A boy understudies his father, while a girl makes herself useful about the house, skinning the day's kill, or fetching snow to melt in the water-tub. All day long small children in the front of

the family partition lean over the edge of the shelf, poke their fingers into the bloodiest piece of meat they can reach, and then suck them. Even an unweaned infant tackles his piece of seal like a man.

Embarrassing Hospitality

The Eskimo hospitality is truly astonishing. Every family tries to do something to add to the comfort of a visitor. One produces seal-meat in an article which at home, it must be admitted, is rarely seen outside the bedroom. Another brings a basin to wash in after the messy performance of eating with the fingers is over, while a third will offer you a scrap of rag for a towel. As soon as you have undressed, your clothes are snatched away by various ladies, brushed, turned inside out, and hung up to dry. Your boots are patched, your nether garments washed and darned, and you are not even allowed to clean your own rifle. From every side you receive all day long those little touches of human kindness that make the whole world kin.

There is one small store on the coast where, in exchange for skins, these people can obtain a few things like rifles, ammunition, knives, aluminium pots and tobacco. It is the Danish Government's policy not to alter the life of the native, or to make things so easy for him that by ceasing to strive he will lose his inherent manhood. There is a Lutheran Mission at Angmasalik where several of these people have learnt to read and write. They have a few picture books, including the ABC—or, rather, since there is no C in the caligraphy, the ABD—and they have got the Bible. These books are copiously illustrated with common or garden objects, such as a tree or cow, but objects that the Eskimo is never likely to see as long as he lives. For all of them there is a native name, even for far more problematical things, such as an elephant and a train.

It was only last year that I used to sit before a blubber lamp, one of a group of almost nude men, together reduced by our nakedness to the common denominator of sheer humanity; while from time to time little children would be sent over to me with a bowl containing special delicacies from the most obscure organs of the seal. Only last year, but it might almost belong to another life. Those Greenland days seem far, far away.



'A place for everything and everything in its place' within an Eskimo hut

Portrait of a Sage

By CHARLES FALKLAND

I HAVE a friend named Carlett whom I use without apology whenever we meet, for he is one of those rare beings who have within them a power to fertilise thought. If you have nothing in your mind, he will put nothing into it; he is not an instructor; but if you have, lying dormant and sterile within you, what he calls 'a mental process', he will give it life. I do not wish to imply that he is an infallible counsellor; indeed, it is not part of his natural method to give advice or to prescribe laws of conduct. But he is for ever throwing off sparks. If there is nothing in you to ignite, they will ignite nothing. To people whose minds are set and unreceptive, he is useless and may appear dangerous. But if you are burdened with ideas upon which you have meditated to the point of staleness—if, for example, you have long been considering the philosophy of some book you have read or that you intend to write, and your meditation has become stagnant or confused—Carlett will compel your thoughts to flow again with new freshness and order.

Though not a professed scholar, he is widely read. After as good a conventional education as a man could wish to have, he succeeded to estates in the West Country, and, moving between them and his house in London, established during the 'nineties and the early years of this century a considerable reputation as a man of bold ideas and vigorous conversation. He was even then often spoken of as an eccentric, for he kept fewer indoor servants than was usual in houses comparable with his in size, he leaned always towards the independence that some men find in waiting on themselves, and, being impatient of the small-talk of politeness and unswervingly eager to penetrate the minds of those whom he met, he had a habit of making direct conversational plunges by which many strangers were disconcerted. A little before 1914 he began to withdraw more and more from ordinary social intercourse, and, retiring to his estates, to live there what may—with an inaccuracy that is usefully descriptive—be called a Tolstoyan life.

His central interests are experimental agriculture and neoplatonism. He is clothed like a labourer; he lives principally on cheese and tea, consumed continually in small quantities; he cares nothing for the elegances or the indulgences of life. But he is a leading authority on those aspects of agriculture to which he devotes himself, he is an able economist whose estimates pay, and, when he writes, his English has the naked utility of Swift's. These qualities contribute to his power, but the core of it is in his courage to eliminate from his life whatever is irrelevant to his central purposes. To visit a barber or to send for one is to waste time and money; he has, therefore, eliminated barbers and cuts his own hair. With none of the affectations that are ordinarily associated with 'simplified' living, he has liberated himself from a thousand habits and conventions that are the ritual of our existences—even from the habit of polite lying and avoidance. If a visitor puts up a conventional resistance which he cannot break down by direct attack, if he finds that nothing of interest or value is proceeding from their association, he ends it. We spend a great part of our time in the company of people to whom we give and from whom we gain nothing. They would be happier without us and we without them; but they stay because it would as yet be discourteous to go, and we entertain them because we dare not march out of the room, leaving them to their gossips. Carlett makes no such pretences, and, because no one expects them of him, he wounds no one. He seldom lingers in general company. Instead, he invites one of those present to escape with him and talk. If you, being chosen, happen, at the moment, to prefer the general company, you say so and stay; he is not hurt by your refusal to accompany him. If you go, you go with an assurance that contact with you is genuinely desired by him. There is no other man living of whom I would say: 'If he tires of our discussion, he will

certainly end it. If I tire of it, I may end it. While it continues, it is, beyond a doubt, fruitful for both of us'. We waste a great part of our lives in sparkless contacts. He wastes none of his.

People who pride themselves on the correctness of their behaviour may be easily tempted to say of him that he throws away talents and opportunities, but the indictment fails. It is true that, having a good country house and estate, he gets from them none of the ordinary pleasures—neither elegance, nor amusement, nor ease. It is true that he buys with his money almost nothing that ordinary men would buy and so lays himself open to a superficial charge of meanness. It is true that, apart from his agriculture, he produces nothing before the world, but spends his writing upon innumerable and various pamphlets which, when they have been written for the satisfaction of his own mind, are pigeon-holed in manuscript. But all these defects, if they are defects, are necessary to his special virtues. Elegance and comfort have been set aside because whoever pursues them accepts the obligations of the life of which they are a part. If he accepted the pleasures of a country gentleman, he would be treated by his neighbours as an ordinary member of their community; he would be hedged in by the ritual of his position, and would have to fight a thousand separate battles for freedom; for it is one of the peculiarities of this world that it will never leave in peace those who half-renounce it. One invitation implies another; one conventional politeness requires another; and whoever would be free at all is driven to extremes.

Though it may be true that the piles of manuscript pamphlets stored behind his desk represent, in some degree, a defect in the organisation of one part of his life, they represent also that quality in him which gives him his peculiar value. Whenever I visit him he has a new enthusiasm, a new discovery, a new point of view. All his enthusiasms and discoveries have an overriding unity; they are all contributory to his system of life; but they have, among themselves, an extraordinary diversity, so that one receives an impression of a man who, within the consistency of his own purposes, is being perpetually renewed. And this renewal in him begets renewal in me. I have been baffled by some problem; wearily I have allowed my mental attack on it to slacken and thought to stagnate. Suddenly, in his company, what had seemed to be dead becomes alive. He does not solve my problem for me but refreshes my own attack upon it. I suppose that he is one of those supreme educationists who teach not by telling but by being. Whether his pamphlets will ever yield place to a great work that will represent him in years to come, I do not know. He may feel that he has memorial enough in the land he has transformed and made fruitful. Certainly he is more concerned to discover himself in relation to the neoplatonic world than to be famous among the *côleries*. And though he is not himself a mystic professed, he has it in common with many great mystics that he applies his perception of the unseen very closely to the common practice of life. If he wishes to produce a change of condition in grass-land, he uses, first, his experience in an attempt to discover by deductive process a means to his end. This is the normal method, and he diligently applies it. But he does not rely upon it alone. He will spend many solitary hours in meditative contact with the grass itself, considering the desired change as though it were a thing accomplished, and reaching out towards it in creative imagination. Precisely how much of his results he wins from this yielding up of his conscious mind and how much by logical effort, he is unable to tell me. That he succeeds where others fail and that his success often appears to be independent of his knowledge is beyond question. It is open to anyone to say that he is fortunate in his guesses. I find it easier to believe that he is, in these instances, applying to himself his power, so often manifested in his contacts with others, of making a gap or channel in the barriers of humanity and enabling new streams to flow in and revitalise the mental pool.

The Popularity of Bach

A GOOD deal has lately been said about the drawing power of Bach. At first sight there seems to be justification for the terms 'astonishing' and 'amazing' that have been used in this connection, but a little consideration will, I think, show that the present-day popularity of Bach is easily explainable on a variety of grounds. There are, however, two main reasons: (1) it is the natural culmination of propaganda that began over a century ago, and that has developed steadily as the immense corpus of Bach's music has become, bit by bit, available for the average performer; and (2) it is merely one of the incidents in the present-day tendency (a tendency not confined to this country) to look backward rather than forward, and to revive rather than to create.

The discussion of (1) demands more space than is available in the present article: it forms, indeed, a part of one of the most interesting chapters in musical history, and I propose to devote a page to it in the near future. All that need be said now is that the English cult of Bach began with a little group of organists with Samuel Wesley as chief. There are few collections of musical letters more interesting and delightful than those written by Wesley to his fellow enthusiast, Jacob, the first of which is dated 1808. In regard to (2), Bach is both cause and effect. Increasing knowledge of his music inevitably led to a study of the contemporaries and forerunners to whom he owed so much. A great creative genius marks the close rather than the beginning of an epoch, and to estimate him aright we have to view him in relation to his fellows. Bach and Shakespeare are perhaps the most typical instances of geniuses whose stature is increased by our realisation of the greatness of their contemporaries.

Bach, then, is one of the causes of the modern revival of interest in eighteenth-century music; and by a natural process he has benefited from the revival. He has been helped, too, by a return to some musical forms that seemed to have had their day. Not many years ago composers were casting about for new forms. Apparently the symphony and sonata held no further possibilities; the fugue was regarded as dry and mechanical; the suite was looked on as a mere precursor of the sonata; the ground bass was an archaic form of variation; the concerto grosso had died a natural death with the coming of the virtuoso, who could not be expected to share the limelight with another virtuoso, still less with two or three. To-day these forms have come into favour again, partly because composers have failed to find substitutes, and partly as a result of the looking-backward tendency mentioned above. Inevitably Bach, as the arch-composer of fugue, ground bass (notably the violin Chaconne and the organ Passacaglia), concerto grosso (certain of the Brandenburg concertos), and suite, has been drawn on to a degree that would hardly have been possible had these early forms remained out of fashion.

A few years ago, when audiences were beginning to crowd to Bach concerts, I was discussing the phenomenon (as it was then held to be) with one of our most distinguished conductors. He was inclined to pooh-pooh the likelihood of a permanently large public for Bach: he regarded the undoubted popularity of the composer as a passing phase, and to a considerable extent the result of a mere pose. I think time will prove him to be wrong. There may be a few *poseurs*, but they do not account for a Queen's Hall packed, not once, but many times, to hear solid programmes of the Concertos and Suites. This music must somehow meet a need of the general musical public of to-day. What is that need? Is it not for vigour, directness, frank tunefulness, and rhythmic vitality? We may reasonably assume that a very large proportion of musical people turn to the eighteenth-century composer, and especially to Bach, whose music is above all distinguished by these qualities, just as the non-musical public turns to jazz, the best of which has a good deal of rhythmic interest and variety (though less than its simple-minded exponents and devotees claim). And the striking growth of the public for Brahms, who derives mainly from Bach, is probably explainable on the same grounds.

Another reason why the popularity of Bach is likely to be

permanent is that its growth has coincided with the growth of musical knowledge. Formerly he was called the 'musicians' composer'; the description did him less than justice, because it had its origin in the early tendency to insist on the scientific and technical aspects of his music, and to ignore its wealth of easily understandable and attractive elements. The average listener has discovered this tuneful and straightforward side of Bach, and at the same time the genuinely musical public (enormously increased during recent years) has acquired a knowledge of the Bach technique that was formerly possessed only by a comparative handful of specialists.

There is a homely proverb that warns us of the danger of putting all our eggs into one basket. Applying this to composers, we see a final and crowning reason why Bach's future is secure. If piano-playing went out of fashion, which composer would suffer the most? Chopin, whose output is practically confined to the piano: his eggs—at all events, his best eggs—are all in that basket. But no composer has his output more widely and fruitfully distributed than Bach. He provides an essential element in the repertory of the organist, pianist, violinist, cellist, flautist, choralist, and orchestra. In only one field is he not represented—the opera; and even there he has an occasional niche with stage performances of 'Phoebus and Pan' and 'The Coffee Cantata'. Music lives by performance, and a composer who appeals to so many types of performer has just so many avenues to popularity.

But if music is to live there must be composers as well as performers, and it has to be admitted that the movement 'back-to-Bach' and other eighteenth-century composers, to the Elizabethans, and even to the primitives, is one that has its dangers. Revival of the great things of the past is good, but there must be creation as well. It is a disquieting fact that the composer of to-day is receiving less and less of a show. Sir Thomas Beecham, conductor-in-chief of the new London Orchestra, has announced that the programmes will contain very few new works: 'I am reviving a good many old pieces of the composers of the seventeenth century', he said, 'as well as some of the earlier symphonies of Tchaikovsky'. And the programmes of the forthcoming series of eighteen symphony concerts to be given by the B.B.C. contain only one new English work. In a recent number of the *Radio Times* appeared an article by Mr. Hubert Foss, entitled 'Fair play, please, for Modern Music'. There is room for such a plea, for if the revival fashion lasts much longer music will be living on its past; and that is the beginning of the end.

Can we not enjoy our seventeenth- and eighteenth-century discoveries without cold-shouldering the moderns? After all, Bach composed, and grew in stature as a composer, because he was usually writing for performance—often under his own direction and almost as soon as the ink was dry. Had he received as little as some distinguished living composers of the stimulus and help that only performance can give, he would probably have dried up, and we should have no Bach to go back to.

P.S.—I am obliged to Mr. John Parr, a well-known Yorkshire bassoon player, for an interesting letter bearing on my recent article on that instrument. I pass on some of his information. Boyce wrote a fine bassoon obbligato (the first ever written, my correspondent thinks) to the tenor aria, 'Softly rise, O southern breeze', in his *Serenata*, 'Solomon'. Another bassoon obbligato is that to the famous tenor solo, 'Una furtiva lagrima', in Donizetti's 'L'Elise d'Amour'. Parry, in his *Evolution of the Art of Music*, refers to Beethoven's 'complete knowledge of the characteristic of the bassoon in its grotesque, humorous, plaintive, and even pathetic aspects'. Mr. Parr wishes Beethoven had written a concerto for it instead of that for the horn, which is hardly ever played; he adds that the horn concerto can be managed a tone lower on the bassoon. It was one of *The Times* music critics who described the bassoon as 'the gentleman, not the clown, of the orchestra'. Finally, Mr. Parr says that he has played 'Lucy Long' hundreds of times, and has even added an extra variation in the minor key, thus making Lucy longer still.

HARVEY GRACE

Folk Music in Mediterranean Lands

By PHILIPPE MAIRET

'Folk-songs of the Mediterranean People' are being played in this week's Foundations of Music

THERE is good folk-music and there is better, but there is no bad folk-music. When the folk play or sing bad music it is because they have got hold of someone else's—and of course that happens now more than formerly, since rapid communications corrupt local culture. The home-made music of peasants in every land is sincere, the co-operative production of composers who could win neither gain nor fame from their labour of love, and it lives by the approval of an audience which is never intimidated by a critic and never listens at all if it is bored. This natural origin makes all such music a precious index of national character. Music and drama are the highest form of 'playing', and as a man reveals his character most directly and truly in the style of his play, whatever the game may be, so does a peasantry especially in its music. If one is musical and also interested in the human race, one may get to know something very significant about other nations from their musical foundations.

All the folk of the world now sing and play to us, by the help of radio and wireless, and we can also enjoy it, for music is a universal language, but it is a language which has its dialects and accents, which often require an effort at first to understand. And even when it is enjoyed, the music of a foreign folk cannot be wholly understood by the hearing alone. It is part of a life which has its own prevalent moods, only to be fully shared when we know that life intimately. Its rhythms go with the people's activities. Obviously, fully to understand a Greek *Pentozali* or Serbian *Kolo* one must have danced it, but we can appreciate and love it none the less as the true and foundational music which it is.

Around the Mediterranean, as elsewhere, the kinds of folk-music correspond with the national regions, so far as these are language areas, for the spirit which gives birth to a speech creates also an original dialect in melody. To this day—to take an instance near at hand—the same tunes are loved in Brittany, Wales and Ireland, which are all Celtic lands, though under different governments. Now and then a single seed of song, blown by chance into the midst of an unrelated people, takes root and lives among them, but this is a rare and exceptional occurrence. Where types of national folk-music overlap political frontiers, it only shows that the frontiers themselves are so far artificial and arbitrary; but where there are mixtures of styles it is due to the actual admixture of a foreign element, or to prolonged political domination by another nation.

A good example of this blending of influences in folk-music will be illustrated in this week's 'Foundations of Music', in the three evenings devoted to the music of Yugoslavia. This is all fundamentally Slavonic music: the Southern Slavs are related to the Russians, Poles and Czechs so nearly that they can all understand each other's speech more or less, despite the considerable differences. But in Yugoslavian popular music hardly anything could be mistaken for Russian; there is none of that mellifluous tone of tragedy which we hear in the Volga Boat-song, and which flowers into cultured expression in the great Russian composers. A sunnier spirit, but still definitely Slavonic, prevails in Yugoslavia, and where it is purest—in Old Serbia and Macedonia—there is folk-music of an exquisite culture, with the most sensitive melodies. Originally it must have been a mixture of Slav and some other culture, as to which we can only speculate. It may even be that the ancient Greek civilisation, which died in this land as the simpler Slav culture arose, left a legacy of musical influence, for in the other arts and crafts of the region there is a certain refinement of beauty and brilliance of skill not equalled elsewhere among the Slavs. But whatever influence may have contributed to it, this music displays the Southern Slav genius at its best.

We find that genius modified in the rest of Yugoslavia by yielding to two powerful foreign influences—to that of the Germans in the North and of the Turks in Bosnia, in the South-west. In the North, the Croats and Slovenes, for centuries under German rule and the Catholic religion, have developed a culture nearer to our own, and this has penetrated to the folk-spirit, which gives their songs a quality more homely and familiar to our ears. It is still the voice of the yearning and aspiring Slav, but in rather more comfortable circumstances.

In Bosnia it is quite another story, and it is astonishing that an influence so alien as the Turkish could have been so much absorbed by the popular music, especially under such conditions of acute conflict between Christian and Moslem. But in this country many of the Slavs embraced the Moslem faith, and have remained faithful to it to this day. The musical mixture is a style of a tropical beauty. As we should expect from Turkish influence, the typical songs of this region show a sensuous, luxurious abandonment of feeling. They are lingering, luscious melodies, often with words about gardens, moonlight and hyacinths—songs with an atmosphere like our imaginations of the Arabian nights, but far more grateful to our ears than real Arabian music.

In most of the Balkans, the theme of war almost eclipses that of love in the folk-songs. Tragical songs of going forth to fight, of heroes killed and of mothers mourning abound everywhere amongst the ordinary themes of village romance and festival. There are the many songs of the Haiducs—a sort of chieftains who at the time of the Turkish invasions took to the woods and hills and lived like Robin Hood, trying to protect their people from the oppressors. In Greece we find the terrible dance

song, which was danced at the killing of the children. Tradition has it that the mothers of a defeated clan would kill their children to prevent their being captured by the Turks, who used to bring up captured children for the army, or for worse purposes. The song tells of a ceremony performed on the brink of a precipice: the mothers circling around singing with their children in their arms, and, each time that a certain point is reached in the chorus, a child is thrown down. Unfortunately I have not been able to obtain a record of this song.

In the present short series of gramophone recitals we shall represent but a very small section of Mediterranean music. The Semitic styles that extend from Asia Minor right round the North African coast, and appear in a highly modified form in the Flamenco music of Spain, are not touched, but they have

influenced some of the music we shall hear. The long-sustained notes and the elaborate coloratura decoration of the melody are features that seem to have found their way into the Balkans via the Turks. The Jewish national music, of which we take opportunity to give some examples, changes like a chameleon according to the countries which the Jews inhabit, but it retains some unity by its Semitic spirit, and by virtue of its one constant influence, the music of the synagogue. Some of this liturgical music is very ancient, and may go right back to Palestine for all we know. There are plenty of good records of these liturgical numbers, but, more often than not, they are ruined by the emotional excesses of unctuous cantors. The finest performances, however, show that they are majestic works of music.

Not many of our present examples will be records of the peasants' own renderings. The Greek and Yugoslav singers that we shall hear are, however, artists to the folk, if not of them, and they are continuing a living tradition, for folk-music is still healthy and alive in these Near Eastern lands. Long may it continue to flourish! For the anonymous music of the folk is ever the purest and most copious source of melodic inspiration.

Mr. Donald Carswell's *Sir Walter: a Four-Part Study in Biography*, has just been reissued in a cheap edition (Murray, 6s.). As all the writers on Scott since the first publication of this book two years ago have realised, and most of them acknowledged, that Mr. Carswell gives by far the clearest and fairest account we have yet had of the extraordinarily complicated business of Scott's financial affairs which culminated in the crash of 1826. His preoccupation with Scott as man of business makes him necessarily give a rather one-sided picture—but as it is a side that all the earlier biographers, notably Lockhart, tended to overlook, it was very necessary to have it as clearly drawn as here. Scott, so Mr. Carswell shows, was not in business matters the misguided innocent of the popular legend, but a perfectly conscious and deliberate agent. A realisation of this greatly deepens the fascination and complexity of his life, and the tragedy of his financial failure.

Success and Failure

*Those coming to Love's fiery tryst
By more than fleshly mouths are kissed.
They are by music's voices spoken
In rich arguments unbroken,
Their weakening and tortuous moods
Lost in the thought of multitudes.*

*But they who rather lease their days
To Pallas and her better praise,
Dwell with ghosts, and go to meet
Tenuous, receding feet.
'This is lovely, this is true,
All the rest is weed and rue',
They may cry, but no one turns,
None a ghost of ghosts discerns.*

JOHN MANN

SIR WALTER SCOTT

Sir Walter Scott died at Abbotsford on September 21, 1832. To mark this date, we publish here the centenary talk broadcast by John Buchan—like Scott a Borderer and a romantic; the talk given to the Scottish Region by the Abbé Dimnet (well known in this country for his 'Art of Thinking' and 'What We Live By'), on Scott's immense popularity and influence in France; an estimate of Scott as 'a Scotsman first and a romantic afterwards', by Moray McLaren; and finally a review of the first volume of Scott's own letters by Miss Agnes Mure Mackenzie, herself one of the most considerable Scottish novelists of to-day

The Scott That Remains

By Lieut.-Col. JOHN BUCHAN, M.P.

A HUNDRED years ago to-day Sir Walter Scott died at the age of sixty-one in his house of Abbotsford. At the time he was the most famous writer in the world, for Goethe's long life had closed at Weimar in the previous spring. When such a centenary as his comes round it is our business to see how such a reputation has stood the passing of time. Every writer, even the greatest, has much that is contemporary and local in his work, much that must inevitably lose interest for his successors. We have to ask ourselves what remains that is essential and indestructible.

For someone like myself, an austere personal assessment of Walter Scott is impossible. Though he has been dead a century, he is still too close to me, and I am too much under his spell. His best work is as idiomatically Scottish as Chaucer's is English and Molière's French. And this means that to a Scotsman he makes all kinds of intimate appeals which the world in general can scarcely understand. I am a Borderer, and much of my life has been spent among the scenes which he has consecrated. I have myself engaged in a humble way in most of the activities which filled his life. I share nearly all his principles, and most of his prejudices. So for me to say what I feel about Sir Walter would be to make an elaborate confession of faith, which I would, I fear, interest no one except myself.

But when I have done my best to exclude all these accidental appeals I find myself forced to a conclusion which I had better begin by stating frankly. I agree with what Byron told him in a famous letter, that there was no one among the living of whom he need be jealous, or, all things considered, among the dead. I think that he is one of the very few writers of our race who stand within the inner circle of the world's greatest imaginative creators—I say 'imaginative creators' rather than 'novelists', for he has done certain things which no other novelist has done. In the few words I am going to say to you here I want to induce you to go back to Scott, and to look in him for those treasures which you will assuredly find.

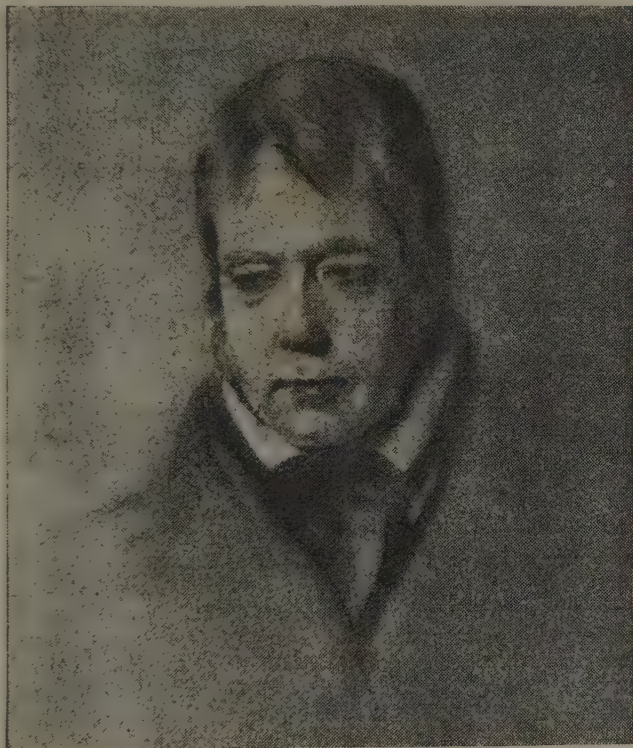
Is Scott Still Read?

Let us begin with a frank admission. There are critics of a certain type who, on the occasion of a centenary, come to bury Caesar, not to praise him. They rejoice in pointing out how much of a man's work is dead. Their attitude is that of the first line of Browning's 'Grammarians' Funeral':

'Let us begin and carry up this corpse, singing together'. What do such critics say? They tell us that Scott is no longer read. That statement I beg leave to doubt. As one who for many years was a publisher, I can testify that Scott is still widely read, more widely than any of our classical novel-

ists except Dickens. But two facts are undoubted. Youth no longer reads him avidly as their grandfathers read him. This is partly because he has been spoilt for the younger generation by being made into a school book, and partly because, in the mere stuff of sensation and adventure, other writers have provided more exciting and more concentrated fare. Again, he has for the most part ceased to interest the critics. That was perhaps inevitable. The novel, since Scott's

day, has enormously widened its province and elaborated its technique, and many legitimate and commendable modern experiments have no relation to Scott's methods. It is natural that a critic should be specially interested in what has a definite effect of attraction or repulsion on contemporary work. Scott, let us not forget, was in his own day an extreme modern, and highly sensitive to contemporary movements. For example, he began by being unduly susceptible to the fantastic Gothic romance which was imported from Germany. He was also a hardy innovator and a bold experimenter. He was the first to present character as a product of environment, and was thereby a forerunner of Balzac. And in some of his later work, such as *The Chronicles of the Canongate*, he seems to me to have curiously anticipated the technique of Tourgeniev. Much of his experimenting is now out of date, for while romance is undying, the costume part of it speedily goes out of fashion. The contemporaneous element in Scott



Sir Walter Scott, from the drawing by Geddes
National Portrait Gallery of Scotland

must be largely discarded, just as the contemporaneous element in some of our moderns, which interests our critics so much, will be largely discarded by their successors. In the lumber-room of literature Scott's 'halidoms' and 'gramercys', his eighteenth-century fine writing, his stilted moralities, will in time be joined by many of what Mr. de la Mare has called 'our own little hot, cold, violent, effective, brand-new, exquisite, fresh little habits of mind'.

Scott and the Critics

Our business is with what remains. Granted that Scott is no longer everybody's writer as he once was, and granted that much which was once admired we may now regard with distaste, or at the best with a tepid approval, can he still appeal to the large class—I think a growing class—which loves the best things in literature for their own sake? Can he still give the serious critic a run for his money? Can he still perform the function of great art and charge the world for us with new and deeper values?

I believe myself whole-heartedly that he can. The truth is that we must revise our view of Scott, and regard him not merely as a brilliant entertainer, what Carlyle called the 'literary restaurateur of Europe', but as a profound critic of



Smailholm Tower, near Sandy Knowe, the home of Scott's grandfather, where he spent much of his childhood and first heard the stirring tales and ballads of the Borders

Photograph: R. Clapperton, Selkirk

life, a master of tragedy and not less of comedy—a disquieting power, but also a healing power. To be judged properly, he must be judged on the highest levels and by the austere standards. You remember that in the hour of his financial downfall he described himself as 'like the Eildon Hills, firm, though a little cloudy'. That seems to me to describe his reputation to-day, and I want to see the clouds dispersed. I want to see good critics do for all his work what the late Dr. A. W. Verrall did for his prose style, and give him that patient imaginative analysis which we give to Aeschylus and Dante and Shakespeare.

But before we come to his work, we must pay a tribute to the man. The centenary of his death is an occasion not only for the assessment of his genius, but for a kind of commemoration of friendship. It is a great thing to have a writer in whom we can rejoice as a human being, for men of letters are not a very lovable race. We know Scott from his letters and *Journal*, from the pages of Lockhart, and from a hundred contemporary sources, more intimately than we know any great man of the past. Even more than Dr. Johnson, he draws us to an affectionate intimacy. He was no plaster saint, for he had many faults and endless foibles. Nothing would have annoyed him more than that we should regard him as a model of copy-book perfections. He always spoke of himself a little mockingly, for though he had a stalwart pride he had no vanity. But few men had ever in a higher degree the humane and manly virtues. He faced without flinching the consequences of his folly, and made atonement. He was undismayed by misfortune and unspoilt by prosperity. He was a great gentleman in every relation of life. He had a tenderness for all humanity, and, as someone said, he treated everyone as a blood relation. I do not know any figure of the past who is so near to us, at once so vital and so endearing.

His Vigorous Objective Interests

There have been critics who have seen in this lack of egotism, this generous interest in the world beyond himself, a proof of failure. He seems to them to lack the profound absorption, the dedication of the great artist. He was not sufficiently serious in his craft. On this I would say two things. The first is that we can judge the results, but we cannot look into Scott's mind and study the process. He gives us the finished product and not the jottings from his laboratory. We do not know what took place during those sessions of silent thought on the hill or by the waterside, when he was cogitating his novels. I think we may well assume that the

result was often not attained without strenuous intellectual and spiritual toil, of which he saw no reason to speak. The second is that his vigorous objective interests seem to me essential to a great novelist. A novel is life interpreted by means of a personality; the personality must be rich, but the experience of life must also be wide and rejoicing. Let me quote to you a sentence of John Milton's on history, which applies to the sister art: 'My opinion is that he who would describe actions and events in a way suited to their dignity and importance ought to write with a mind endued with a spirit, and enlarged by an experience as extensive as the actors in the scene'. A poet or a philosopher may work in a hermitage, but a novelist must be about the world, and the more he can share in the ordinary affections and interests of men, the better he will get inside their skins.

A writer lives by his books, and it is by them, of course, that Scott must be judged, and not by his qualities as a friend and a citizen. His faults are many and obvious, so obvious that I am not going to waste any of the short time at my disposal by pointing them out, since all can see them for themselves. I would rather direct you to his transcendent merits.

Romantic and Realist

In the first place he takes a very large tract of life and moulds it to the purposes of art. The width of his range is like Shakespeare's; no other novelist except Tolstoi covers anything like the same extent of country. He is limited to no one social grade, to no one corner of space, to no one epoch of time. He is equally at home in the city and in the wilds. Certain aspects of life no doubt were shut to him—types, for example, of great spiritual or intellectual subtlety, and women of his own class, whom he preferred to treat as well-mannered and somewhat insipid goddesses. But nearly the whole of his wide experience was, if I may borrow a happy phrase from Lord David Cecil, 'fertilised', and gave grist to the mill of his imagination. Most things in the present and in the past awoke his interest, and whenever his interest was awake his people live. As I have said, and as Balzac acknowledged, he was the first to draw his characters in relation to the traditions and circumstances, political, social and religious, in which they lived. The result is that they have a striking verisimilitude, for we recognise the world behind them. His great characters are the least 'literary' in fiction; compared with their vigorous idiomatic life, most of the people, even in admired novels, are bookish. They seem to march on to the stage independent of their creator, and sometimes, as Falstaff did with Shakespeare, they

take charge of him and go their own way. No imaginary creations were ever more fully realised, for though Scott was a great romantic he was even more a great realist. Everything they do, every word they speak, is a step in a consistent revelation.

Let me cite a few examples—and I fear they are chiefly Scottish, for he was most at home with his own countrymen. From *Guy Mannering* I would choose Dandie Dinmont, the Border farmer, and Pleydell, the Edinburgh advocate, and Meg Merrilies, the gipsy. From *The Antiquary*, Edie Ochiltree, the beggar, and Saunders Mucklebackit, the fisherman. From *Old Mortality*, Cuddie Headrigg, the Clydesdale ploughman. From *The Heart of Midlothian*, Jeanie Deans and her father. From *Rob Roy*, Andrew Fairservice, the mean and pragmatic Scot, and Bailie Nicol Jarvie, the generous and pragmatic Scot. From *Redgauntlet*, the elder Fairford, the Edinburgh lawyer, and Nanty Ewart, the smuggler. From *St. Ronan's Well*, Meg Dods, the innkeeper. That is a fairly wide range, and we can add people in utterly different walks of life—Mary of Scots in *The Abbot*, King James in *Nigel*, and King Louis in *Quentin Durward*. And there are scores of minor figures who are all alive because they are seen in the round, not dried specimens in a collection, but growths exhibited in the soil and atmosphere to which they belong.

The Poet's

Interpretation

That is the first thing to observe. Scott is a great realist in presenting his people. The second is that he is also a poet and an artist, and proceeds to transform that very real world into the world of romance, and shape it into drama and beauty. That is his peculiar genius. He was not content to rest in the visible world. Knowing his people so completely, and the intricate complex of life behind and around them, he can evoke, with the strictest logic and relevance, strange moods and unexpected deeds. He is a master of comedy, since he is always conscious of the comic spirit and the element of farce that interpenetrates life. He never allows his greater figures to strut, and in the scenes of tensest drama—the death of Fergus MacIvor, the madness of the Covenanters after Drumclog, the close of *The Bride of Lammermoor*—there is always some comedy, and ironic anti-climax to give the mind relief and link his dreams with earth. A critic for whom I have a profound respect, Miss Rebecca West, does not admit this; she finds his failure to lie in the forced pace of his novels, what she calls his 'bluster . . . without any remission of serenity'. I differ most respectfully but most confidently. It seems to me that it is in this cunning lowering of the note, these intermissions of sober common sense, this constant reminder of the prosaic world, that we have one of Scott's greatest endowments. I never feel, as I feel sometimes with Dostoevsky, an intolerable emotional strain which ends by dulling the mind.

He has the converse gift, too, in the highest degree. If he can see the farce in the splendid, he can see the splendour in the prosaic. That is the only meaning I have ever been able to find in the word romance—to discover the jewel in the pig's snout, the treasure in the dung-heap, some core of beauty in squalor, and of heroism in the unheroic. The Highland cateran in *Waverley* rises at the Carlisle trial to a supreme self-sacrifice; the prosaic Hanoverian general in *Redgauntlet* speaks classic words of reconciliation; the Glasgow Bailie, with his honest knees knocking together, becomes a Berserker; it is not the grandee who in the crisis is the hero, but Edie Ochiltree, the beggar; it is the peasant girl, Jeanie Deans, who shows the noblest fortitude.

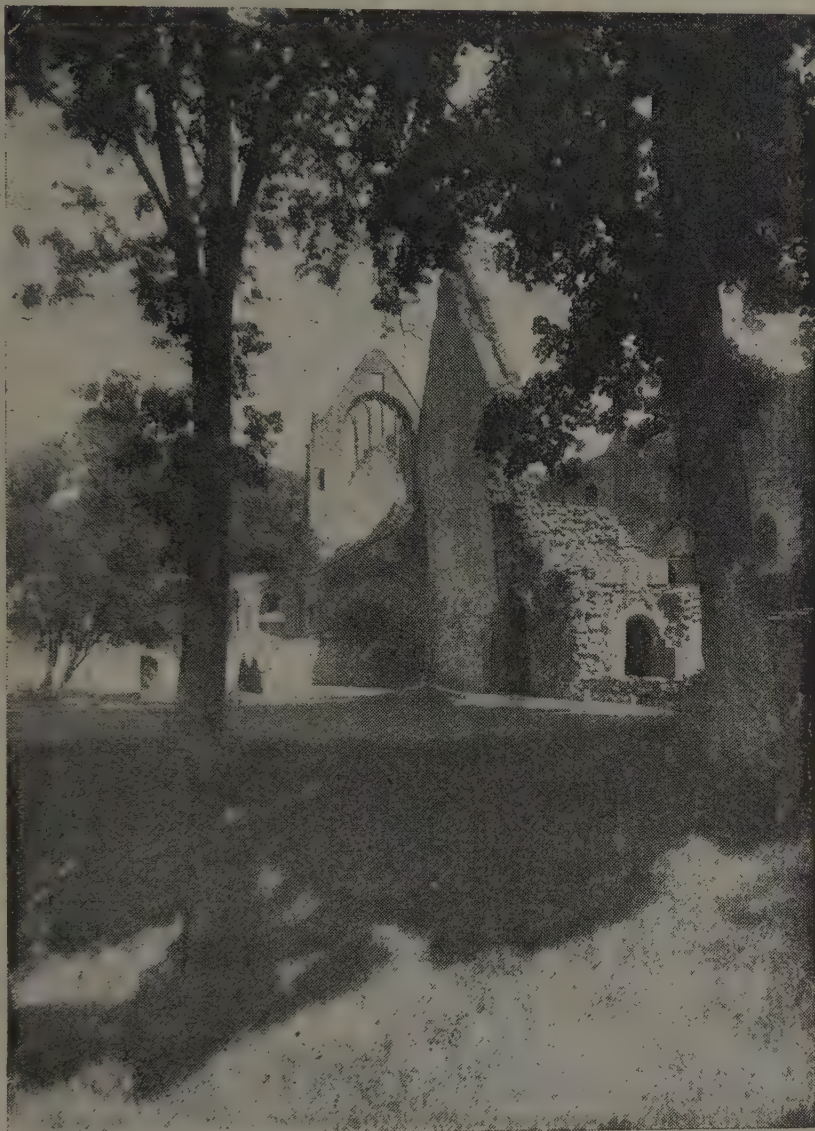
These homespun exponents of the heroic are true heroes and heroines, for in their great moments their speech can rise to the dignity of great poetry; but they remain solid, satisfying, recognisable people. We know them for what Scott meant them to be, not creations of romance, but plain folk, adequately interpreted.

Mystery and Tragedy

He is a master of comedy, but he is also in the direct line of the great tragedians, and in this respect no other English novelist, I think, approaches him. This cheerful romancer, whom some would have us regard as fit reading only for the callow adolescent, is in truth one of the most disquieting of writers. He prepares the ground artfully with his solid recognisable people, well knit, massive and apparently secure, full of homely humours, living in a world which is on the whole friendly and orderly, where things work out by the law of averages, and goodness is rewarded and vice punished. He lets comedy

do its work and makes this world sunnier and more spacious than we had thought. And then suddenly he opens the door to something which we are not expecting, a breath from a very different sphere. He lets in tragedy, which is the failure of something not ignoble through inherent weakness, or through a change of circumstances to which it cannot adapt itself. He shows us loyalists like Fergus MacIvor and Redgauntlet and Ephraim MacBriar, broken on the wheel of fate. He shows us goodness, like Clara Mowbray's, tragically unrepaid. He shows us the bitter suffering at the back of a glittering social life—Saunders Mucklebackit mourning for his dead boy, and that wonderful scene in *St. Ronan's Well* where the woman of the cottage where Hannah Irwin is dying speaks her mind about the easy charity of the rich, and that other in *The Chronicles of Canongate* where Christie Steele has her masterful say on the same matter.

He can do more. He can do what Shakespeare does, and trouble the mind with whispers from that half-world which is neither of nature nor outside nature, but is beyond our understanding. When the dying Madge Wildfire sings 'Proud Maisie', when Meg Merrilies, like an ancient sibyl, expounds



Dryburgh Abbey, by the side of Tweed, where Scott is buried

Photograph: A. R. Edwards, Selkirk

her wild forebodings and regrets, when in *The Bride of Lammermoor* the witch-wives gossip in the churchyard, when Elspeth of the Craighburnfoot in *The Antiquary* croons by the fireside of a forgotten world of pride and pageantry, when Steenie Steenson in *Wandering Willie's Tale* sees the grim company about the tavern board in Hell—Scott does something which few novelists have attempted, something which ranks him with the great tragic poets.

I have just been on holiday in the very far North, and I have been re-reading some of the Sagas, and I find the same thing in them—a homely, recognisable life lit suddenly by broken lights which were never yet on sea or land. Scott makes the world for us more sunlit, but he also makes it more solemn. He provides us with a mirror in which we can read the transience of human glory and the futility of human hopes. Few men can make so real the shadow of mortality. Few can so cunningly darken the stage and make the figures no longer men and women, but puppets moving under the hand of God and eternity.

But if he wounds, he also heals. His drama ends, as all true drama should, in peace, as when in *Redgauntlet* General

Campbell speaks the chivalrous words on the beach which reconcile the warring loyalties of the antagonists. Scott knew what Miss Rebecca West has called the 'perilous magic' of the world and the tragic dualism of life, and his purpose, never avowed, not even perhaps consciously realised, is reconciliation. He has that profound sense of the 'army of unalterable law' which we find in the Sagas, a law to which wise mortals must submit, and in submission find peace. But it is a willing submission, for in this law there is a soul of kindness. He explores the tragedies and ironies of life and finds in them not only pity, but mirth and a divine charity. He has that quality which the Greeks valued above all others, *Sophrosyne*, which means the possession of saving thoughts.

With that word I conclude. I fear I have done what I promised not to do, and have given you principally a confession of faith. I have told you what I find in Walter Scott, but I have not had the time to attempt to prove my case. But I hope I have said enough to induce some of my hearers to go back to Scott and make a fair trial of him for themselves. I believe they will find that he can give them what few novelists can give them, and not many poets—a great heritage of both warmth and light.

Sir Walter Scott in France

By ABBÉ ERNEST DIMNET

WHY are you addressed to-day, through the air, by a Frenchman? Simply because many English-speaking people, even those who are not experts in comparative history, realise that Sir Walter Scott has exerted in France an influence which must be acknowledged by the French.

In the spring of the present year the Franco-Scottish Association asked Professor Grierson of Edinburgh to come over to Paris so that Sir Walter Scott could be duly celebrated by the most learned voice and before a highly sympathetic audience. The ceremony took place, as became its character, at the Sorbonne, and the Press gave it the importance to which it had a right. You may, as I state this, experience a slight mental recoil: There is something artificial in all that is official, and architecturally as well as officially the Sorbonne is cold. Even the sincerity and literary cordiality of such a warm-hearted man as Professor Legouis hardly succeeds in thawing it. This is what you feel, and what inclines you to question and inwardly minimise the significance of a Sorbonne celebration. Such psychology is largely accurate. In fact, the French newspaper readers who did not know personally the many friends of Scotland or admirers of Scott present at the Sorbonne that day felt exactly as you do. Official, a little artificial! But, please, observe this: the people who were conscious of this reaction disliked it, were made uncomfortable by it. What they felt was *not* that the Sorbonne celebration was amiss, but that it was inadequate. Now, what is this, if not an aspect of the sublime thing called glory? Mere fame can be done justice to in a Sorbonne ceremony: not so the warm radiance surrounding the name of a Walter Scott. What people desiderated was an intimate gathering of real lovers of the great Scotsman somehow managing to diffuse their own sympathy through the whole world. Now, such a combination of intimacy and publicity is, of course, a dream, but it is exactly the kind of dream which the Franco-Scottish Association was endeavouring to make reality. An impossible effort, no doubt, but such as is never made except when true greatness is being met by true love. Sir Walter Scott belongs to his admirers of whatever nationality in proportion to the quality of their admiration. In the same way, Molière is nearer to the Englishman who is delightfully conscious of the French playwright's kinship with Shakespeare than to the Frenchman who runs away from the *Comédie-Française*. A hard saying to the Nationalist, but a delicious one to the worshipper of beauty.

His Nearness to the French

But in the case of Sir Walter Scott there is something peculiar which the Sorbonne celebration was trying to express, and that is his nearness to the national soul of the French. When I was a schoolboy I had no definite impression that Walter Scott was *not* a French writer. He was never referred to as a foreign novelist, and we never thought of him as one.

When our English teacher, from a sly desire to make us realise why 'sheep' should become 'mutton' when eaten, read out to us the first pages of *Ivanhoe*, they seemed entirely natural; we were infinitely less conscious of anything foreign in them than when the same teacher treated us to the Dotheboys Hall episode in *Nicholas Nickleby*, apparently so much more accessible to young minds. A little later, when I myself began to teach, at Douai, my headmaster, a stern old priest of a school now dead and gone, once said to me: 'Novels are useless, of course, but I read a novel of Walter Scott's every year'. I was surprised that the austere gentleman should read even one novel, but not that Walter Scott was the author chosen. On the contrary, the advisability of its being Scott saved the strangeness of its being a novel.

Ten or twelve years ago I was taken round the château at Loches by a custodian who knew fully as much about the castle as any professional antiquary, but was as enthusiastic as if he had learned it all yesterday. As we tarried in the Two Bishops' dungeon and the visit was drawing to an end, I innocently started to tell the guide about a book which, if he ever chanced upon it, would tell him this and make him feel the other, and which I knew he would thoroughly enjoy. The man, leaning back against the dungeon wall, was listening with an air of infinite patience and a sort of pity. Finally he bowed, and with crushing politeness, the memory of which still tingles, he said: '*Quentin Durward*, sir! Wasn't I given *Quentin Durward* as a prize-book when I was ten? And have I not read it over and over again till I know every word of it by heart? Scott! my dear sir, Walter Scott! Surely the man never could have uttered the name of Victor Hugo with the same fervour.

Memories of the 'Auld Alliance'

How is it that the French feel such kinship with Sir Walter Scott? The fact that he is the most brilliant representative of a race which, during a succession of generations, was closely associated with their own might partly account for it. The French have not forgotten that many famous Scots were educated in France, chose to live there and attained to eminent positions, especially in the army or the clergy. It is perfectly natural to read that a Scottish officer, Ramsay, lived at Cambrai in the intimacy of Archbishop Fénelon. Even a hundred years before, young Montaigne did not regard his teacher, the great Buchanan, as an ordinary foreigner. Few Frenchmen visit Scotland without being conscious at their first contact with the people of something familiar in the faces, in the expression, and above all in the voice. The way in which people pronounce the letter R is like the Masonic sign, and a French R is a Scottish R. At his very first attempt to speak French a Scotsman may sound incorrect but he does not sound foreign. Surely the consciousness of all this survives in the French. But something similar ought to survive in them as well

with regard to Ireland, for there were also Irish students in Paris and Irish officers in the King of France's army, and their descendants are with us to this day. Yet neither Dean Swift, nor Oliver Goldsmith, nor, in spite of his Paris successes, George Bernard Shaw, is so dear to the French as Walter Scott still is after more than a hundred years.

It is not that Scott is exceptionally partial to the French. In spite of his French wife he is rather the reverse, not only in *Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk* or in the *History of Napoleon*, but in many slight touches abounding in the novels. The French, as a rule so sensitive to criticism; condone that attitude. They account for it by saying to themselves that the France which Scott knew during twenty years of his manhood must have impressed him very much as Soviet Russia, with its sanguinary story and ominous designs on the rest of the universe, must now impress a pilgrim of 1900 to whom Russia was Holy Russia. Marguerite Charpentier was, in England, exactly what a distinguished *émigrée* Russian girl is in Paris to-day. When Scott married her he did not have to espouse her views. He had inherited them. Most French readers realise this, but, even realising it, they would be more ruffled by Sir Walter's digs if the writer were not to a certain extent naturalised in their eyes.

But why is he thus naturalised? Because it is not with impunity that more than two million volumes in innumerable French libraries bear the name of Scott and frequently appear bound with the special care betraying affection. Five generations of children in country house or school have seen those handsome sets of books and been encouraged to dip into them. 'These are by Walter Scott, my dear; many a happy hour have I spent with them when I was your age'. Of course, the same may be said of Fenimore Cooper, but not in quite the same tone. Why? Because even people only mildly interested in the history of literature know that Sir Walter has had so much influence on French literature that he actually lives in it.

His Influence in France

As early as 1815, barely a year after the publication of *Waverley*, when Sir Walter visited Paris for the first time, he found that the Great Unknown was extremely well known in literary French circles. *Waverley* had been translated within a few months of its publication, and had been received with perhaps more delighted surprise than it had awakened in Great Britain. For the English-speaking reader was used to romanticism, whereas to the French it was an exquisite novelty. Sir Walter was more anxious, at that time, to meet soldiers and statesmen who had *done* things than literary men chiefly desirous to tell them. He did not suspect that at the very moment his inspiration was the spark starting a vast conflagration. But when he revisited the continent, in 1826, no longer protected by anonymity and preceded by the fame of volume after volume which he had filled with his peculiar magnetism, he could not avoid knowing his own prodigious eminence. He, a Scot, one of the *extremi hominum*, was active in the revival of Italian literature. When he expressed his admiration of *I Promessi Sposi*, which was just being published, Manzoni rightly replied that his book would have been unthinkable had not Sir Walter blazed the path for it.

In France his influence had been even greater. One morning, at the Hotel Windsor, a young aristocrat, Count Alfred de Vigny, brought him a book entitled *Cinq-Mars*. This was the first French historical romance since the long-forgotten efforts of Mlle. de Scudéry, and it was destined to have a marvellous progeny. Vigny, in spite of his natural reserve, was overcome by emotion as he paid homage to the man without whom his inspiration would never have been given free flow. Lamartine was thirty-six and in the full *éclat* of his talent. Victor Hugo,

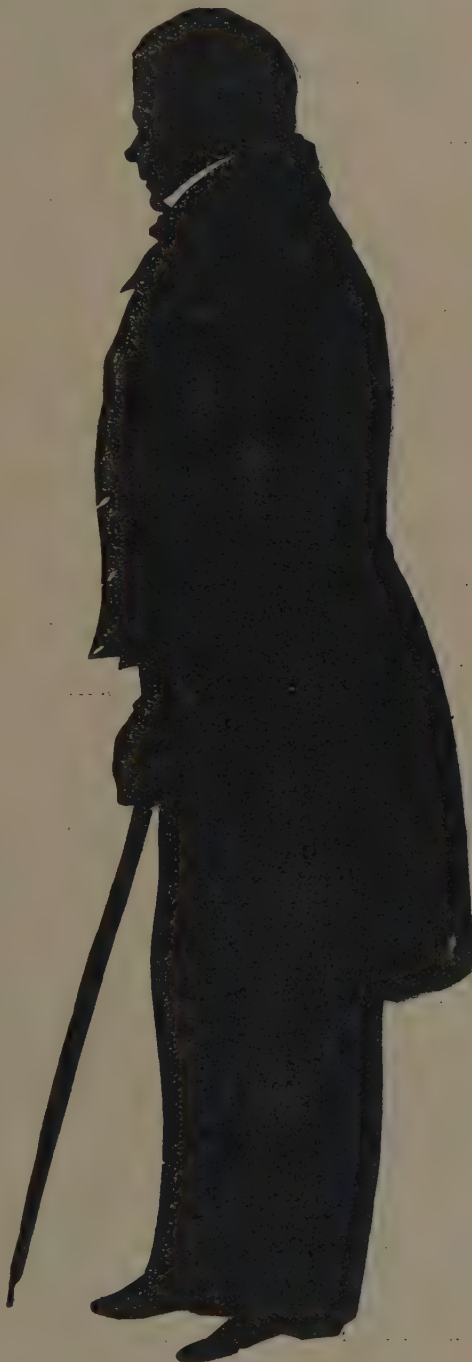
barely twenty-four, had already passed the stage of mere promise. Both of these great poets constantly proclaimed their indebtedness to Scott. History also was being modified by the influence of the *Waverley Novels*. If *Quentin Durward* had never been written, Count de Barante could not have thrown over his descriptions of the Court of Burgundy the glamour which had been so rare in writings of that kind. Augustin Thierry too, though supposed to have had through Chateaubriand the revelation of what lifelike history should be, leaves no doubt that he had read Walter Scott.

Scott and Balzac

Finally, surprising though it may seem, Balzac himself—Balzac, the Shakespeare of the novel—might have remained in ignorance of his deeper vein if Scott had only written poetry. That unique genius was humbly imitating Mrs. Radcliffe when, at the age of twenty-two, he chanced on the *Waverley Novels*. The admiration he felt was too strong at first to let him liberate his own genius. In his *L'Héritière de Birague* Scott was still rather clumsily transposed. But three years later Balzac came into his own and his transformation became complete. In his preface to *Les Chouans* he has explained at full length how his whole literary horizon expanded under the influence of one illuminating idea: this was to apply to modern times the method used by Scott in his mediæval descriptions. From the day that revelation came to him Balzac, who had so far only produced feeble imitations, became as prolific as Sir Walter himself and *La Comédie Humaine* remains with us to tell its own tale. For Balzac is not out of fashion, shows no sign of being so, and it is difficult to open any modern book of fiction without being conscious of his presence at the writer's elbow. That is why we can say that, in the last analysis, Sir Walter Scott is a living influence in the French literature of the past hundred years. And this is what, vaguely or clearly, people feel when their eyes light upon the family set of the *Waverley Novels*.

But are those books still read, or are they only appreciated for their

binding and cared for because they have been on our shelves so long? Is Walter Scott really read in France? I hear your question, and I catch in it a ring which makes me give it a Scot's answer. Is Walter Scott read in English-speaking countries? In America, outside of the schools where *Ivanhoe* and *The Talisman* are subdivided for dreaded assignments? . . . In England? . . . even in Scotland, where the tradition of only reading the best is better kept up than elsewhere? You hesitate and I hesitate. The fact is that while people brag of reading Balzac, occasionally debate the advisability of reading Dickens, and attack or defend George Eliot with positive heat, hardly anybody speaks of Sir Walter Scott. Those who do, do so enthusiastically because they evidently live with the host of characters this supremely fecund imagination has created for



Silhouette of Scott made by Augustin Edouart
National Portrait Gallery

our diversion, or because they love Sir Walter, love him as if he were telling his stories just for them. But how few they are!

People used to say: you have to have read Scott early to read him at all; and it was largely true. Now even children carefully kept away from modern trash apparently refuse to read the *Waverley Novels*. But this purely negative attitude is not the worst. Every now and then you hear positively adverse criticism: Scott cannot describe love, people say, and it is comical to reflect that he blamed himself for being too outspoken concerning Effie Deans; Scott is slow and has no idea of interest; Scott has no style. The latter criticism may appear the most unfounded to anyone who knows what 'style' means, but it is the most frequent, and I have found it, couched in trenchant language, even in a recent issue of the Italian paper *La Sera*. So we might groan: no, it is a fact, Scott is not read any more.

But if you make a few soundings among educated French people, you may be surprised to hear them say in an offended tone: 'Why, yes! I have read Walter Scott and I wish I had time to read him again'. Or, if you remark in a less educated circle that Scott is no longer read, although he is still reprinted, you become conscious of a pained attitude and of scandalised astonishment.

What does it all mean? That Walter Scott is treated like most classics are, by preterition. Who dares to be enthusiastic about the Bible? about Shakespeare? But there is something singular in the case of Scott, and that is that he is regarded personally as a man of irresistible attraction, a noble man and a thoroughly good fellow. People love his frank, open, gentlemanly face, and are not afraid of his commanding brow. They may not read him, but they read every article about him: they even wade every now and then through the—to me—overrated pages of Lockhart. To put it in a nutshell, in this age of literariness we are grateful to Walter Scott for having been so much above mere talent. Can there be greater praise of a writer in this year of grace 1932?

A few years ago I had the privilege of addressing Scottish audiences in a few ancient and revered Scottish towns. I have not forgotten the delightful sensation of sympathy instantaneously established. In telling you of what we French people owe to the greatest Scottish writer, I have been discharging a debt of gratitude; perhaps having become myself an English writer I feel the gratitude more than another Frenchman might. I wish I could have expressed it worthily and adequately!

Scott and Scotland

By MORAY McLAREN

IN an open space in the centre of one of the loveliest cities in Europe, a clumsy, ill-proportioned neo-Gothic spire jerks its pointed way up into the pale blue or deep gray northern skies. Though it would dominate most cities, it cannot conquer Edinburgh. Nevertheless, it is inevitable, almost omnipresent. Most of the citizens pass it daily, and every visitor asks the reason for it. Beneath it, stifled by the weight of the angular and awkward canopy, crouches a white figure whom it is intended that this growth on a fair prospect should honour—Walter Scott.

The inhabitant of the modern Edinburgh who is proud of his city is never sure whether he is more ashamed of the appearance of the Scott Monument, or more proud that we in Scotland should at least have honoured our great literary figure in a truly monumental, even gigantic, manner. Compared with the Shakespeare statue in Leicester Square, which, through grimy leaves, so smugly surveys the painted throng and gilded circus that nightly circumambulates it, it is an impressive if ugly effort. And it is not meaningless. Indeed it is symbolical of an element in the city's life. Near to it conductors of motor buses, wearing tartan bonnets and displaying noses that are, one suspects, artificially and deliberately reddened, solicit with carefully uncouth cries the attention of passing tourists, assuring them that they will be able to take them on an afternoon tour through the romantic beauties of the Scott country—whatever that may mean. All around, and in many other ways, the time-worn trickery of tourist-luring is in the summer months in full swing, no worse nor better than in any other capital of Europe: only here it all seems to be done in the name of one man—Walter Scott.

Sir Walter and Sir Harry

There are two roles which we in Scotland are expected to play by many of our visitors, the romantic or the comic. Draped from head to foot in tartan, we are expected to pose against a back-

ground of a heather-clad mountain in search of a cause worth losing. Or else we must dye our hair red, raise a whisky bottle to our lips with one hand and pick threepenny bits off the pavement with the other. The world likes its facts presented to it highly coloured, and it is not surprising (nor perhaps should we complain) that two obvious elements in the Scottish character, the romantic and the comic, should have received the doubtful benefit of world-wide publicity. Moreover, there are those who

have said that two Scotsmen are to blame (if blame there be at all), Scotland's two greatest publicity men—Sir Walter Scott and Sir Harry Lauder.

Though it is true that a large amount of those who do not know Scotland, look at her at first through the genius of this Baronet and this Knight, the theory is not really just to Walter Scott; but perhaps there is something in the other half of the idea. It is Sir Harry's business to be entirely comic; other considerations naturally come second, and all over the world he has vigor-

ously offered up his nationality upon the altar of his humour. His genius is undeniable and compelling. If Scotsmen object, they should remember that as much censure attaches to us who have uncomplainingly accepted his world-wide version of us as alcoholic misers. It is difficult to imagine Englishmen tolerating a music-hall comedian of international celebrity, who had won his fame by jokes upon the occasional English failing of gross over-eating and its consequent physical ills.

When Scott Began to Write

With Scott it is different. He was a Scotsman first, and a romantic long way second. That his romantic genius has been made the excuse for many years of pseudo-Scottish romanticism is largely an accident. It is not his fault that for nearly a hundred years we have been afflicted with the complaint which Mr. George Scott-Moncrieff has described as 'Balmorality'. The accident of his circumstances and the time at which he wrote have combined to attach Scotland's mock romanticism to Scott.



The romantic conception of Abbotsford is apparent in this engraving from the painting by Turner

He is no more really responsible for it than for the architecture of the monument by which Edinburgh reminds its visitors of him.

To understand this, we must cast our minds back to the time when Scott was writing. A century of Edinburgh wit and wisdom had come nearly to its end. Burns was dead; Goethe was at the height of his powers. The industrial era was peeping over the horizon; the house of Hanover had been on the throne for a hundred years and Scotland was beginning—only just beginning—to show signs of the loss of her national virility and independence. True, she had a reputation in Europe for philosophy, good conversation and the study of political economy. Edinburgh contained wits that were internationally famous, but as a country she had for long remained upon the fringe of Europe; she had long ceased to be a danger to England and played no part in the politics of the world. In spite of the wit and wisdom that came from her she was as a country largely unknown amongst the ordinary people of Europe. Her philosophers might vie with the encyclopædists of Paris, and the studious and historically minded visitors might pass through on their journey North (without caring to stop at London) in order to visit Edinburgh, that fountainhead of a certain dry wisdom which was purely Scottish; but it is doubtful whether the ordinary untravelled and unlearned person of Europe at the end of the eighteenth century would have heard anything of Scotland at all.

Interpreting the Romantic Way of Life

And then came Scott. Goethe had distributed his dreams amongst the wise and the youthful of Europe; Byron was beginning to make romanticism *à la mode*; Madame de Staël had studied the romantic nations of the north with all the learning and vigour of the bluestocking; Jean-Jacques Rousseau had become a famous figure, but it was left to Walter Scott to teach the world, the ordinary common novel-reading public, the meaning of romantic fiction and the wide exciting sweep of the romantic view of life. It was as if to-day there were to arise some novelist, poet, or musician who would suddenly make comprehensible to the ordinary man in the street the strange desires and yearnings of modern art. At a time when the majority of Europe was still illiterate, when the cheap novel, the daily press and the thousand-and-one modern aids to publicity had not yet been invented, the influence that Walter Scott brought to bear upon the world through the art of novel-writing was amazing. In every country of Europe his books were read, and through them the people of the western world became aware that there was a new spirit alive that meant something, not only to kings, statesmen, revolutionaries, and obscure poets, but to each and all of them.

They became aware also by accident of something else at the same time, and that was Scotland. It may not have been a true Scotland of then or now; may not even have been the Scotland of which the author of the Waverley Novels had intended to write. But they became aware of a wild, historic, strange—in a word 'romantic'—country lying to the North of England whose past seemed suddenly to them full of the most fascinating stories of high romance, treachery, devotion, great contrasts and wonderful happenings. Through the art of Walter Scott a *terra incognita* was discovered to them, and they called it Scotland.

That their romantic ideas may have been based on something that was false, and that their dreams carried them too far, was not the fault of Walter Scott. He was, it is necessary to repeat, a Scotsman first and a romantic afterwards. He could not help writing of Scotland, of the country in which he was born, and which formed the background of his life and death. His genius and the romantic spirit which was coursing through Europe forced him to write romances prolifically, but there was something deeper in him than the romantic spirit of his genius; something that was more essential in him, and that is that with all his faults and virtues he was a Scotsman and desperately conscious of it.

Putting Scotland on the Map of Europe

The consciousness of nationality is often an uneasy thing in a man's life. It will drive him to extremes of which other desires and the knowledge of other things are incapable. The patriot and the religious fanatic have much in common. They are both compelled by something without them at whose mercy they seem to be. It would be ridiculous to claim Scott as a fanatical Scotsman, but what is perfectly clear is that Scotland was in one way the strongest passion of his life. He could not escape from it and the finest of his art is clearly strengthened by his Scottishness. Those novels in which the true sense of vitality overcomes any strains of pseudo-romanticism, are those novels most essentially Scottish in character—*The Antiquary*, *Rob Roy*, *The Heart of Midlothian*—these are authentically Scottish, as every Scottish critic knows. And even the brightest, youngest and most modern of those literary critics of Scott who have chosen this Centenary year to swarm about Sir Walter, pecking away with somewhat shrilly expressed gusto at his faults, cannot deny that in the Scottish characters in these books, the spirit of our country has seldom, if ever, been better expressed.

Occasionally Scott was driven into action more forcible than novel-writing by the sense of his nationality. Those who think of him merely as the rather efficient snob who organised so well the reception to George IV upon his visit to Scotland, would do well to turn to his Malachi Malgrowther pamphlets in which he so vigorously attacked the threatened disappearance of the Scottish Bank privileges. It is largely owing to Scott that we have in Scotland to-day one of those few of the outward and visible

signs of separate nationality, the Scottish Bank Note—a possible subject of yet another Aberdeen joke and one a little more bitter than usual. Indeed, 'in his faults' as well as his virtues, Scott displayed many of the essentially national qualities of the Scottish bourgeois (and that is meant not in any contemptuous sense) of to-day. His very name is symbolic. He could not escape from his country. It was the strongest thing in his mind's eye and it produced the best that was in him.

And so it is unjust for the thoughtless to blame Scott for all the mockery of sham tartan, Gothic glooms and second-rate romanticism which infect his memory a hundred years after his death. It is true that through his genius he put Scotland, as it were, upon the map of Europe, in a position it had never occupied before. It is not his fault that it is painted in bright unauthentic tartan colours. Nor is it true, as some superficial would-be witty critics have said, that modern Scotland should be spelt 'Scottland'.



Edinburgh's Memorial to Scott—and to Nineteenth Century Romanticism

Topical Press

Letters and Appreciations

The Letters of Sir Walter Scott. Vol. I, 1787-1807. Edited by H. J. C. Grierson. Constable. 18s.

Sir Walter Scott To-day. Edited by H. J. C. Grierson. Constable. 10s. 6d.

Scott Centenary Articles. Oxford University Press. 7s. 6d.

Reviewed by AGNES MURE MACKENZIE

THE Scott Centenary has produced a torrent of ink, where Mr. Buchan's *Life* and the reprint of Mr. Gwynn's *nant in gurgite vasto*, like signors and rich burghers of the flood, among consorts some of whom, as current modes of thought make inevitable, belong to that class of biographical matter for which I am forced to coin the word *suburbulous*. Towering among the fleet comes the bowsprit of the great Constable edition of Scott's Letters, the first of a series of ten stately volumes where a team of skilled workers under the leadership of Dr. H. J. C. Grierson—the most fitting of all captains for the venture—has for the first time gathered together reliable texts of the vast bulk of Scott's surviving correspondence, including many letters never yet published, and the true text of others hitherto garbled or mutilated. This volume contains some two hundred, of which no fewer than ninety-eight are here first printed. They consist in the main of letters written by Scott between the ages of 16 and 36, and begin with an early, newly-discovered love-affair, in which, unluckily for their current news-value, one finds nothing more discreditable than the chivalrous adoration of a decent lad of 16 who can laugh (and to the lady of his delight) at his own sentimental poems to the moon, and to whom the chief attraction of his Jessie would seem to be that she liked his beloved ballads and was willing—that most powerful of feminine charms—to allow him to improve her mind for her. They leave Scott Sheriff of Selkirk, master of Ashestiel and head of a family, already, alas, the partner of Ballantyne; and more happily, editor of that landmark in European literature, the *Border Minstrelsy*, and of Dryden, brilliantly successful author of the 'Lay', and writing 'Marmion', although—at 34—he had chosen to make his formal adieu to authorship, with the oddly prophetic qualification, 'unless I should by some strange accident reside so long in the Highlands . . . as to paint them . . . in a kind of companion to the Minstrel Lay'.

It is true that the letters of a great creative artist, even of one with Scott's candid daylight manhood and his genius for friendship, are not the place where one finds his profoundest self; one must go to his work for that. Yet even in Scott's fiction, great part of one's pleasure is to travel through a world in Scott's company. Here is that company as his friends knew it, his headlong energy, sane steady manhood, warm clear-eyed kindness, and fine courtesy. We have both the universal Scott and the temporal and local, the former the friend of all Europe, acknowledged as spiritual father by men as unlike each other as Stendhal, Manzoni, Hugo, and Pereda, the latter perhaps a little puzzling to the modern, especially modern English, reader. The fact of a common language, of an international companionship Scott shared and enormously strengthened, is apt to blind English readers to the fact that their sister kingdom is not England in a haggis and tartan bows, but a country at least as foreign to theirs as France, and least so, perhaps, in the obvious externals. The result, in Scott's case, is often a charge of pose, brought against precisely those things most natural to him. Nowadays, indeed, time has made difficult for many readers that side of Scott which his English contemporaries could understand; I have seen him charged with sycophancy, no less, because his letters use the stately formulæ of the ordinary courtesy of his day, when sisters addressed each other as *ma'am* and *my lady*, and family life was probably none the worse; yet Scott had as little of the snob who adores a duke because he is one as of the snob who insults him because he is one. People who fail to understand the eighteenth-century scholarly man of the world, a figure familiar in their own history, can hardly be expected to grasp that very un-English combination, the fusion of that with the Border gentleman of a fighting house, or to understand that Abbotsford, for Scott, was not a naïve rise from the professions to squirearchy, but a return to his inheritance after natural, interesting, and creditable adventures; which he still proposed to continue along with it.

Alas! the inheritance was fairy-gold. The whole collection of Scott's lost business letters to Ballantyne, from 1807 through the 1813 crisis to 1818, reached the hands of the editors at the last moment, and is now first published here as an appendix, with a full analysis by Mr. James Glen, of the tangled Scott-Constable-Ballantyne finances. They throw fresh light on the details of the final crash, though they merely confirm what one knew of its essentials—that the adoration of all Europe, from kings to fishmongers, could not spoil Scott as a social human

being, but, since he was mortal, it spoilt him as man of business, encouraged too much the Scottish recklessness under his Scottish caution. A gambler has not the substance to be great; but no man is great unless he can be a gambler; and Scott was great. Like the chief man of action of his time, he let the winning game go to his head, and over-risked. The worse for him, but the better, perhaps, for us, who can see in him so magnificent a loser. Like his country, he never showed to more advantage than with his back to the wall, facing hopeless odds . . . and as his country has done more than once, by facing these odds, he achieved what seemed impossible. He saw victory approach, and the dead man won a fight as gallant as the Otterburn of his ballads.

Besides his work on the letters, Dr. Grierson has gathered seven centenary essays, with a pleasant introduction of his own. Principal Rait, discussing McCrie's attack on *Old Mortality*, throws light on Scott's treatment of history: Professor Gundolf, Mr. Aubrey Bell, Professor George Gordon and Mr. Hugh Walpole show the range of Scott's debt to Europe and influence on it in their papers on Scott and Goethe, Scott and the Spaniards, Scott and Balzac, and Scott and the historical novel in English, though Mr. Walpole's coy admission that he 'uses England in the sense of Britain' 'because I like the word better', does not reassure one as to his conscience towards historical fact. Still, I am glad to know that next time I cannot spell Czechoslovakia I have his authority to call it Spain, and if he is slovenly on the 'historical' he has some sound things to say about the 'novel'. Mr. Lewis Spence discusses Scott and folk-tradition, and Miss Edith Batho makes the point, too often overlooked, that although Scott was not at home in the high Middle Ages—the eleventh to fourteenth centuries—he was very much so in the age of the great sagas, and that 'Dandie Dinmont would have been at home in tenth-century Iceland'. Your Scottish 'Celt' is so largely Scandinavian that the point was worth making, and here it is made with scholarly evidence.

The Oxford University Press has been happily inspired to reprint eighteen leaders which appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement* at intervals from 1914 onwards, in commemoration of Waverley centenaries. Two are W. P. Ker's, though that great teacher is not quite at his best, writing delightfully of the minors *Nigel* and *Quentin Durward*, and the failure *Peveril*, but anglicised enough to be puzzled by the great *St. Ronan's Well*, with its combination of ballad tragedy and shrewd manners-painting, though the Elizabethan drama would give parallels. Mr. W. H. Hutton writes well of *The Betrothed* and *The Talisman*, Mr. Arthur McDowall takes the *Journal* and *Woodstock*, with fine sympathy, against their background of the crash of Scott's fortunes. Principal Rait deals with Scott as critic and judge, and writes interestingly about his periodical work, though one regrets that there is no reference to the wise and sometimes profound critical dicta scattered through the delightful neglected *Lives of the Novelists*. Professor George Gordon handles *Redgauntlet* and that ill-known miniature masterpiece, the opening of *The Chronicles of the Canongate*: his study of the manuscript of *Redgauntlet* throws an interesting light on the way in which the images in Scott's mind grow and develop as he gallops up to them. The bulk of the book is Mr. Thomas Seccombe's, whose eleven essays cover seven of the Great Nine, and some lesser things, including a charming paper on those chapter-headings that reveal how close was Scott's brotherhood with the Elizabethan dramatists. The national barrier shows a little in his acceptance of Caleb Balderstone as purely comic: he is comic, but like Lear's fool or the servants in *Coriolanus*, he is used to give the final twist to the rack, to flay a pride that since his torture of it proceeds from loyal devotion, cannot defend itself without its own scorn. That apart, however, Mr. Seccombe's essays are both wise and delightful, and one is grateful to him for dismissing a lot of critical nonsense about Scott's careless speed with a dry 'He had been incubating his subject-matter from the age of seven to the age of forty-three'. To those who know the novels, the book is like a pleasant fireside discussion in good company: it would serve well, however, as guide for those who are just reaching the age to read an author who, save for minor work, best bolted at fifteen, should never be tackled before one is thirty-five. Like Shakespeare and Cervantes and Molière, the great Waverlies are not stuff for the adolescent, but one of the compensations of maturity.

Science in the Schools

NOTHING is more astonishing than the power of logical thinking young people display, if they are allowed to grow up intellectually and their spontaneity is not curbed. Cannot we introduce into the class-room something of the atmosphere of the intelligent home, where children show knowledge and judgment years in advance of their school performances? This sentence from the printed address on the Advancement of Science in Schools, which would have been delivered by Mr. Mayhowe Heller at the British Association meeting this year but for an unfortunate accident, might be taken as the text for his remarks. Mr. Heller approaches the well-worn subjects of science teaching in schools and of the evils of external examinations with an experience as inspector and administrator of technical and vocational schools in the Irish Free State. He believes that science and its method is the most needed force in education to-day. He has seen in his time great increase in the machinery of school science, but he has grave doubts as to the design, efficiency and purpose of the machine. He believes that the curricula of many schools—especially secondary schools—are based far too much upon the demands of external examinations. They take little thought of the boys and girls who are being taught, or of their work and other activities in after life. They stifle spontaneity and originality and supply for the variable needs of life a common product produced in mass. Unlike some others who have views on education he stresses the vocational outlook of science teaching in schools. Without neglect of mental and aesthetic development, education must, in the broad sense, be directly and indirectly vocational. He envisages his pupils as potentially successful farmers, doctors, schoolmasters, housewives, architects, motor-mechanics and lumberjacks. The purpose of training them in scientific method is that early they may get into the habit of cautious and judicial approach to the problems that confront them. They should develop a power of diagnosis—of facing facts courageously and self-reliantly—and acting accordingly, which should be of the utmost value to them and others in after life. The new material for all this is not any one science, but bits of many sciences—general science—founded not on text-books but on the requirements of examiners but on the phenomena of common experience, or upon the special interests of the teacher or his pupils or of the environment of the school. How the body keeps warm can be made the core of a two years' course in a girls' school on the fundamentals of general science; another suitable set of subjects is 'Air, burning, breathing' which involves physics, chemistry and physiology. All this is well said.

Some of Mr. Heller's criticism of science teaching is very sound and will pass unchallenged. His condemnation of undue specialisation is excellent. It has been a criticism of teaching, especially of science in English schools, that it is mainly designed to train children not for what is vaguely described as 'life', but to make them into schoolmasters and dons. It is applied in the teaching that all who receive it have a wide and sustained interest in it, plenty of brains, a good memory, excellent manipulative skill, sufficient means to keep them at school till 18 and at the University till 22, and no object in life but to teach and research in their specialist subject. Actually children leave school at 14, 15 and 16 and should have courses which finish then. These should be in general science or 'natural knowledge', and not on one particular science; they should go for the main facts, generalisations and laws, and not be cluttered up with tuppenny-ha'penny detail.

Mr. Heller thinks that science teaching at the present time is much too bookish and didactic and there I think others will join issue with him. He contrasts two methods of giving instruction, the natural or 'heuristic' method and the didactic method, much to the detriment of the latter. In the didactic method (at its worst) you simply pump the right information into your pupils' heads, and drill them so that it stays there till after the examination. Laboratory instruction is simply instant practice in doing routine operations. The expert teacher in this game is one who can intelligently spot the questions the external-examiner will set and see that his pupils are word-

perfect in them. He will refer to such 'selections' in class as 'dead-snips' or merely 'odds-on chances', and if on the day of examination he proves right, his pupils not only do well but have the added joy of being 'one-up' on the examiner. In the heuristic method (at its best) children are encouraged to think for themselves and to express themselves, and are given ample opportunity to do so. Their irresponsible activities are gradually and carefully directed to inquiries into definite problems within their powers of comprehension. Lessons are conversational and argumentative, but need not exclude didactic statement where such are necessary to add interest and to make progress. The teacher becomes a leader and not a driver or racing correspondent. Mr. Heller is so enamoured of the 'natural' method, however, that he asks whether there is in fact an alternative. The answer is, of course: Yes, the didactic. Most science teachers agree that the heuristic method is excellent within narrow limits and in certain part of the work, but it is always slow and sometimes broken-backed; pupils taught heuristically have been known to have a less perfect grasp of what they were doing than those who were told what it was all about without any pretence that they had 'discovered' it for themselves. At its worst the heuristic method is only the method of Mr. Squeers. 'We will go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickelby—the regular education system, C-l-e-a-n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W-i-n, win, d-e-r, der, winder, a casement. When the boy knows this out of a book, he goes and does it.' The text-book and the book of nature are both necessary in science teaching. The quarrel between the didactic and the heuristic method is analogous to the fruitless one between authority and private judgment. There should be none; the best points of each are indispensable. And this, in my experience, is realised by those who teach science in the public schools.

The subject of external examinations is one which should not be lightly embarked on. Mr. Heller regards them on the whole as bad; they strangle much that is spontaneous and original in science teaching. But it should be remembered that examining boards now will set special papers for any school which feels its style is cramped by the requirements of the ordinary examination. Oundle School, which is the embodiment of much of what Mr. Heller desires (although he does not mention it), has had its own special examination papers for many years. External examinations have obvious weaknesses, but they are quite certainly better than school tests or school recommendations, which are the alternatives. The modern external examiner is, as a fact, as keen as the best science masters in making the teaching of science as fine and as effective a thing as it can be made. He should, ideally, co-operate with the masters in assessing the work and should interview the boys he is examining, but the written examination cannot be dispensed with, although there is increasing opinion that 'the practical' might go.

Summing up, Mr. Heller thinks that in the past twenty-five years the teaching of science in schools has gone backwards rather than forwards in quality and purpose. The worst is touched in the elementary schools with pupils under fourteen. He puts the blame for this on an inadequate supply of the right kind of teachers as well as on the causes mentioned above. His experience is wide and he is entitled to his opinion, but I cannot see how he arrives at it. There is a much wider knowledge of the facts and principles of science in this country than there was, say, twenty-five years ago. Boys, and especially girls, are entering technical employments and facing responsibilities with success there which were unthinkable a few generations back. And I am of opinion, though it would be very difficult to prove, that there is to-day a wider diffusion than ever of the scientific mind and of the scientific attitude to problems confronting one, although, as we all know, there is far too little of either. My own experience, although it is narrow and in a field different from Mr. Heller's, is that the teaching of science in schools is one of the soundest things in modern education. What does the reader think?

A. S. RUSSELL

A Versatile Programme-Builder

B.B.C. Talks. September—December, 1932. B.B.C. Post Free, 1d.

THOSE of us who pretend to be old-fashioned (and there comes a time in life when you think you are pretending to be old-fashioned, but you really *are*) will carry to our graves a sort of 'tranquil consciousness of superiority' about broadcasting. We shall say to ourselves—lecturing, the performance of music, all that counts in the life of the mind, is three-dimensional; and the B.B.C. is necessarily in one dimension. In other words, a lecture or a concert means three things—a voice or sound borne in upon the sense of hearing; a vision of lecturer or musician as he is in the actual flesh and person, borne in upon the sense of sight (as can never be done, by the way, in any scheme of television); and a feeling of contact with others, who are listening by your side—a feeling of fusion of minds, which arises immediately from a sense of touch, but vastly transcends that sense. Assemble these three things, and you get the flesh-and-blood lecture or concert, the 'thing in itself', in all its three dimensions; isolate one of the three, and you get an abstraction of sound in its one dimension.

I am but a voice:

My life is but the life of winds and tides;
No more than winds and tides can I avail.

Now all this is very well in argument (and it has often been said in argument by the present writer); but is it altogether true? Cannot imagination add the two other dimensions; and is not the imaginative listener blessed also with a sort of sight and even of touch? And anyhow, is there not gain to be got in one dimension, especially when you cannot get at the three-dimensional?

Certainly there is gain, and rich gain, in the autumn talks programme of the B.B.C. Somehow the B.B.C. transcends the one dimension: it manages to attain the flesh-and-blood life of a personality, with a character and policy of its own. 'Consider your verdict upon me', it asks, in the preface to the programme of Broadcast Talks just published; and in asking that question it makes a claim, which is genuinely justified by what it has done, to a personal character and a definite genius.

The character and the genius which have inspired the programme suggest some happy reflections. Let us assume (of course wrongly, for he is certainly a committee or a symposium) that the programme-maker is one man; and let us amuse ourselves by guessing what sort of a man he is. Well, he is singularly versatile: he probably took both Classical 'Greats' and Law at Oxford; he was interested in politics, and spoke at the Union; he afterwards travelled on the Continent, and learned foreign affairs at first hand; he kept abreast of art and literature when he returned to London and settled down to read for the Bar; he attended concerts and was fond of the cinema; he had a little property in the country to which he went every week-end, and he liked farming and gardening; and besides all this he found time to be interested in psychology and to cultivate the society of doctors—which, by the way, is some of the best society in the world. Having done all these things he prepared this programme of broadcast talks; and it illustrates admirably his admirable training and versatility, and his sense for practically everything that matters in the modern world. He has morning talks for the early listener (*bonnes bouches* for the early bird); and among them, for example, is one by a Cambridge friend of his, Mr. R. A. Butler, on India, in which he has lately been travelling. He has pre-prandial talks (which are far better than cocktails) at 6.50; he has invited his friends Mr. E. M. Forster and Mr. G. K. Chesterton to talk on New Books; he has secured Mr. Agate to talk on the Theatre; and (remembering his foreign travels) he has asked French and Italian and Spanish scholars to hold entrancing and useful conversations on exactly the things you want to know about Paris, or about Italian idioms and Italian travel, or about the way to learn the noble language of Spain. He has another series of pre-prandial talks (alternative or complementary—you can take them as you like) about 7.10; he has invited some of his medical friends to address us anonymously—otherwise they might offend against the etiquette of the profession—on the Doctor and the Public; he has a course of Farmers' Talks; and, loving gardening as he does, he has got four garden-lovers, including his friend Mr. Beverley Nichols, to talk on 'The Week-end in the Garden'. (You see, he can only get down to his own little property at the week-end.) But he has reserved his strength for the 7.30 lectures, which are to be genuine dinners for a hungry mind. Remembering his Classical 'Greats', he has invited a distinguished succession of scholars to talk on *Our Debt to the Past*—not only of Greece and Rome, but also of Judea and the Middle Ages. Remembering his Law, he has induced Lord Macmillan, followed by an Oxford lecturer of his day, to speak on the Law of the Land. On this course, which he proposes to supplement by debates on Legal Problems, we may congratulate him especially and warmly. But

while he remembers his Classical Greats and his Law, he does not forget his love of literature or of foreign travel: he has asked Mr. Desmond MacCarthy, justest of critics, to speak on the Art of Reading; he has invited three other friends to speak of Old Neighbours in America, Germany and France. Indeed he is indefatigable. If you are still hungry (and he pays you the compliment of thinking that you will be), he has talks for you at 8.30 on *How the Mind Works*—for one of his interests, you will remember, was Psychology; and if you still remain hungry, having been busy on other things hitherto are only ready for talk at this later hour, he has fascinating addresses by Miss Stella Benson to a Budding Novelist, or Mr. Bernard Shaw to a Politician; or he has talks by Mr. Vernon Bartlett on Foreign Capitals, delivered in the very capital about which he is talking, or he has political debates on current issues, introduced by leading men of the day. But, you will say, he has forgotten art and music, which we were told that he cultivated. He has not forgotten them for one moment. He has a series of talks on *Art in Ancient Life* every Sunday, thinking so much of it that he gives it the best day of all; and as for music, he has invented some new ideas which will fascinate music-lovers (who, after all, are the backbone of the B.B.C.)—such as five-minute talks by Dr. Adrian Boulton on the programmes which he then proceeds to conduct, and other happy unions of commentary with actual performance of the music commented upon. Nor is this all. . . . But it is enough. O most admirable planner of programmes! And O most admirable of programmes!

P.S.—The wife of the writer of these lines suggests that the programme-maker, being a man, and obviously an unmarried man, has one defect. He does not understand the times and seasons of women. Otherwise he would not put his talks for mothers and housewives at 10.45 in the mornings, when every mother and housewife is sure to be busy.

ERNEST BARKER

Report on Crossword No. 130—Jumble

Many competitors missed the point of the crossword's title and were confused by having to find room for the redundant 'R' in 10 Down, whose home should have been in the vacant space next to 13 Across, but solutions with this space left blank are also accepted. In any otherwise correct solution the alternative word 'ATELITE' for 5 Down will be accepted if solvers will quote their authority for giving it. Prizewinners are as follows:—

H. H. George (Merton Park), C. M. Jenkin-Jones (Bootham), W. A. Jesper (Haxby), F. Leeson (Whalley Range), and M. Mayall (Cheadle Hulme).

ACROSS

12. Anag. (c) nigm(a).
15. Actaeon's dog. One of the Harpies.
17. Moorfields Eye Hospital, recently the Week's Good Cause.
18. Noemics. (I.C.S.)
23. Onion, rev. blub, weep.
30. Has gnats reversed.
35. Swift: *Gulliver's Travels*.

DOWN

1. Contains chair.
3. Percy's Reliques: Cophetua disdained all womankind.
4. 'Corbies and clergy are kittle shot'.
6. Drama.
31. Can spell unreal.

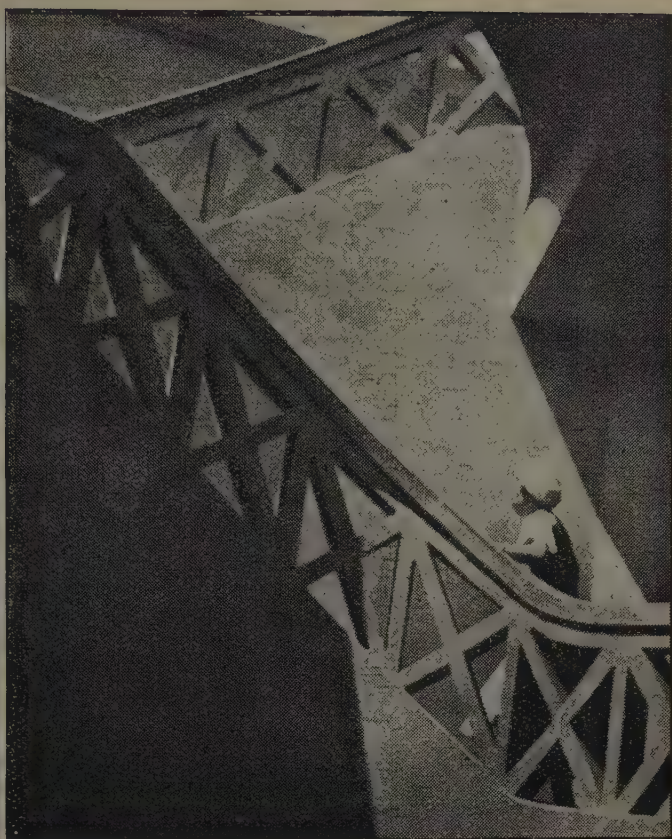
M	R	I	P	I	C	C	A	D	I	L	L	
A	N	E	C	D	O	T	A	G	E	O		
C	O	N	A	C	R	E	M	I	N	G		
H	G	E	P	R	B	L	A	M	O	R		
A	E	L	L	O	I	E	R	M	O	O		
I	N	O	E	M	E	N	A	B	O	L		
R	E	P	E	A	T	E	R	B	U	L		
T	H	E	R	G	U	E	S	S	I			
D	O	O	M	O	T	S	O	W	E	N		
U	R	N	L	B	O	S	T	A	N	G		
S	I	D	A	O	L	O	B	E	L	I		
L	O	R	B	R	U	L	G	R	U	D		

CROSSWORD RULES

1. Entries should be on the printed diagram and envelopes containing them should be addressed to the Editor of THE LISTENER, Broadcasting House, Portland Place, London, W. 1, and should be marked 'Crossword' in the left hand top corner. 2. Clues are not normally given for words of two letters. There are no capricious tricks and legitimate alternatives are accepted. 3. Collaborators may only send in single joint solutions. 4. The Editor reserves the right to disqualify entries for late handwriting, late arrival, and on suspicion of a breach of the preceding rule. 5. Subject to the above rules, the sender of each correct solution is given a copy of the book prize, when one is offered. Competitors may suggest an alternative book of the same price when sending in their solutions. 6. In all matters connected with the Crosswords the Editor's decision is final.

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Camera Compositions



Two photographs from the Exhibition of the London Salon of Photography at 5A Pall Mall, East. Left: School of Breughel, Shell Fish, by P. Dubreuil. Right: To Roof Garden, by H. E. Kimura



From the Royal Photographic Society's Exhibition, at 35 Russell Square—New York, by Irving Browning

Weekly Notes on Art

The Building Centre

THE founding of the Building Centre, just opened at 158 New Bond Street, is a good idea although not, as some people seem to think, a new one. Similar centres have been in existence on the Continent and in America for some time; in fact, New York, I understand, provided the incentive for the present outburst in Bond Street. Perhaps that is scarcely necessary to record, but the well-established Materials Bureau at the Architectural Association should have proved before now sufficient inspiration for an enterprising mind. Probably it is more chic to be inspired by America.

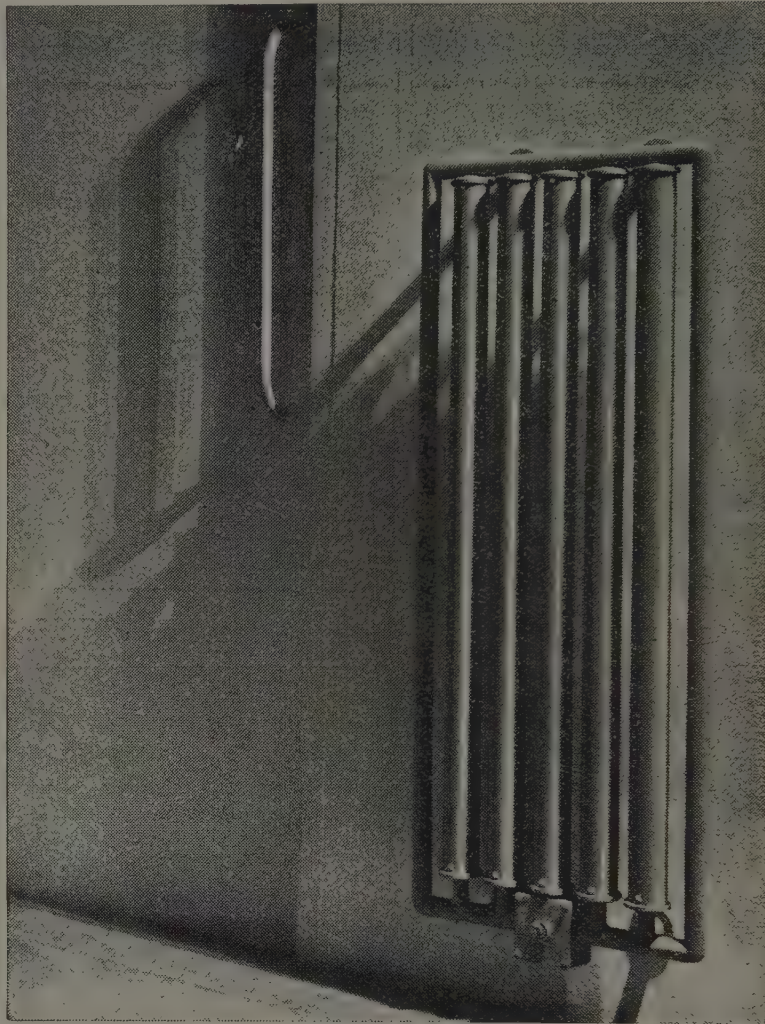
The purpose of the Centre is to bring about a closer, more sympathetic touch between the organised forces of supply and the scattered, untamed and bewildered masses that represent demand. At least, that is one aspect. Incidentally, the Centre should be a lesson to others besides the layman. The architect and designer may learn both what is available and what is yet lacking. The manufacturer may be persuaded of what is, and what is not, required.

Knowing that the opening of the Centre has been greeted with considerable criticism of the commercial dog-in-the-manger kind, I hesitate to carp at what I believe to be, at least by intention, a sound enterprise; but I think it must occur to most people visiting this permanent exhibition, that the space at its disposal is wholly inadequate. For what reason such an eminently technical and utilitarian display should attempt to spread itself in the heart of Bond Street is past comprehension. There is something almost Surrealist about its incongruity. There is, also, one would imagine, something deeply unpractical. Probably, however, it is securely founded there upon an indisputable psychological fact. But for whatever reason it is there, no amount of ingenuity—and much has been used—can possibly show, to the best advantage, the unbelievable variety and interest of the display. Not even Woolworth's, with their genius for ordered arrangement, could subdue the Building Centre into harmony. As an index it is slightly exciting and, I have no doubt, efficient; as an æsthetic display, it is a nightmare. Having reached the point of considering the Centre from an æsthetic angle, let us see to what extent it can be capable of æsthetic interest. Unfortunately, this involves another criticism. The Centre exhibits the work (on payment for space) of 'manufacturers' only, and is concerned only with building. It is not for the use of independent designers or for the display of any kind of furnishing. It is a little confusing, therefore, to discover in the first room lengths of fabrics by individuals and a few pieces of furniture, and in another place, a room entirely devoted to furnishing materials. All these exhibits, however, are there by invitation, just to take the edge off the harsh taste

of brick and plywood and to make the place look more 'homey'. Possibly it may serve this rather absurd purpose but, certainly, it brings home to us the crying need for a logical extension of the Building Centre into a Building and Furnishing Centre and surely it is a mistake to suggest to the public by the display of a few casual odds and ends of stuff that the Centre

covers the two activities when, in reality, it does nothing of the sort. The interest of the Centre as a directory and a display is quite sufficient; its appearance is not improved by the introduction of frills. On the other hand the organisers are doing their best. The upper room, at present hung with samples of printed and woven fabrics, is to be used for other exhibitions of adjuncts to furnishing. If the scheme is carried through, it is to be hoped a more careful selection will be made in future, although an exhibition in such a small area cannot hope to be representative. I am afraid there is no way round the difficulty other than to follow up the admirable example set by the Building Centre and to establish its inevitable complement—a Furnishing Centre.

In the meantime, there is much beauty, as well as technical interest and general usefulness, to be found at 158 New Bond Street. One phenomenon particularly should impress visitors to the exhibition—the evidence of individual design beginning to make itself felt in manufactured standard articles. In the regrettable



An evidence of individual design in manufactured standard articles—Bar tubular steel electric radiator and steel door handle, designed by Mr. Wells Coates for the Cresta factory, Welwyn Garden City

absence of any photographs of isolated pieces shown at the Centre, I reproduce a specimen of individual design by an architect who has the peculiar distinction of being also an artist. Anyone who has seen Mr. Wells Coates' work in Broadcasting House, or even photographs of it, must recognise a designer of exceptional powers. The other illustration represents a display of glass which may serve as a hint of the kind of peculiar beauty to be found in such details, which abound in endless variety at the Building Centre. PAUL NASH

Mr. G. H. Gater, Education Officer of the L.C.C., in his broadcast last week reminded his listeners that evening classes are just starting on their winter's work at the 250 London polytechnics, schools of art, technical and commercial institutes. He drew attention to the fact that the unemployed who wish to join any classes receive special consideration in the way of fees; and urged that all who intend to take any course should enrol immediately and make every effort to keep a regular attendance. Another series of evening courses of which we would remind our readers are those at the Mary Ward Settlement, 36 Tavistock Place, W.C. 1, which also have just begun. The subjects covered are politics, economics, psychology, literature, drama, music, art and handicrafts. On Tuesday each week there is a public lecture, and on Fridays and Saturdays the Tavistock Little Theatre offers an attractive programme of plays.

The Cinema

You Can't Fool the Public Twice

C.A.L., the well-known film critic, discussing present tendencies in the Cinema, concludes that 'the movies and the public are growing up together, the public wanting something to think about, the movies trying to provide it'

Of course, it is perfectly obvious that any clever showman can fool the public, and especially in the film industry, which has been based on a policy of illusion right from the beginning. The very essence of motion picture photography is to fool people into thinking that a still figure is moving. The essence of the talkies is to fool people into thinking that a photograph has got a voice. In the studios the technical staff are always thinking out new dodges for tricking the public. They use the trick of double exposure, so that a man seems to be talking to himself on the screen. They use ultra-rapid camera work, so that the figures seem to be moving with that curiously slow, arrested motion that you get in dreams sometimes.

The whole technical process of making a film is one long orgy of trickery. Films are shot in one country and new voices grafted on to them in another. In Alfred Hitchcock's first talkie, *Blackmail*, the heroine was played by a Hungarian actress, *Anny Ondra*. But when she opened her mouth to talk, out came the very English voice of *Joan Barry*!

Another talkie, called *The Doomed Battalion*, was responsible for some rather funny compromises. Perhaps you will remember it—it was a story of the war in the Austrian Alps, and was shown a couple of months ago at the Empire. The original picture was made in Germany, but an English dialogue version was afterwards made from it in Hollywood. So what we finally saw was *Luis Trenker*, as the mountaineer, gliding across the snows on his skis, entering his cottage and embracing his wife; but the ski scenes were all taken in the Austrian Alps, while the scene showing *Trenker* greeting his wife with the snow still clinging to him was shot in the Universal studios in Hollywood.

You have only to put your nose inside a studio to see how this business of fooling the public is going on all the time. A short time ago I was in one of the biggest studios in Europe, watching a new film being made. The whole place was a vast reproduction of a French station, even down to the list of arrivals and departures on one blackboard, chalked up in what was obviously a foreign handwriting. There was a magnificent engine shunted into siding, a giant of a thing, strong and realistically grimy. I went up to have a look at it. Then I went behind to see it better—and it had not got any behind! It was just a shell of wood, *papier mâché* and plaster, and the wheels were only on one side facing the camera. They were shooting on the next set in a Pullman coach, crowded with people, and brilliantly lighted. It was swaying about most horribly and realistically, giving the impression that the train was travelling at an immense speed. It made me quite sick to watch it, so I went round the corner to see what kind of an engine was responsible for this trick. There was no engine at all; it was just a bored-looking individual in shirt sleeves leaning idly against the back of the car and levering it up and down with a bit of wood.

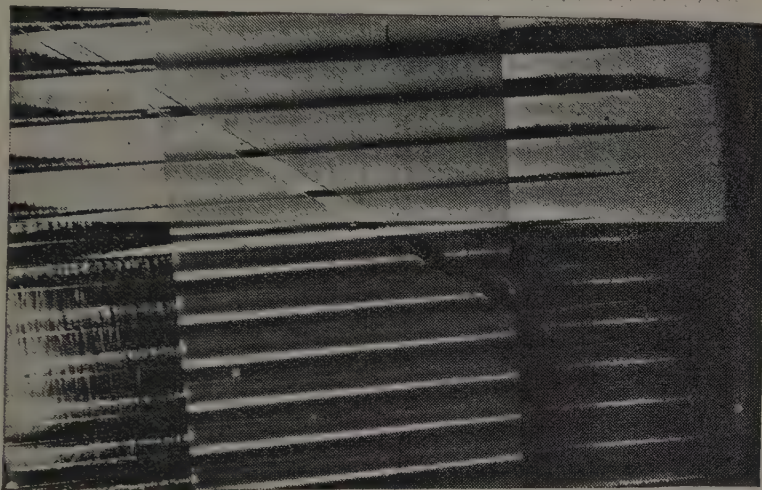
In all these technical details the film industry can fool the public and does, and, as a matter of fact, the public does not in the least mind being fooled. We can't be expected to know just what can be done with, let us say, an optical printer or the schufftan process, any more than we really know how a crack bowler puts a particular spin on his ball, or how exactly *Mr. Baird* produces the televised image sent out from the B.B.C. I was not really thinking of these technical details when I said that the film industry could not fool the public. I was thinking of the actual quality of the product sent out for public exhibition in the cinemas.

Now, I am not for a moment suggesting that bad films do not get a booking. They do. But on the whole films of this kind do not do any good to exhibitor, renter, producer or star. They act as a boomerang and hit everyone connected with them. When the next film comes along on the same subject or with the same star, the public are apt to be very shy of it indeed. They have been fooled once, and they are mighty careful not to be fooled

again. I do not think there is much doubt about it, the best films always get the best audiences in the end. If a film is genuine and simple, and does its job well, the public will like it, even if they have to get out their handkerchiefs and have a good cry.

They like to see a star like *George Arliss* in a film like *'The Silent Voice'*. It makes them feel good, though they may not quite know why. They like a film like *'Emma'*. They feel neighbourly towards *Marie Dressler*—she is a real human being—she might just be poor Mrs. Jones next door. They like a film like *'Merely Mary Ann'*. It gives them a perfectly good excuse to be sentimental. They like, above all, a film like *'Jack's the Boy'*, because it makes them laugh. And I am not at all sure that that is not the best thing a film can do. The public have their own idea about the value of films. It is often quite different from the Wardour Street idea. And they have their own idea, too, about stars.

Film companies can no more foist a star on the public than the public does not like than they can get a film past the British Board of Film Censors that the censors will not have. There are certain star names that definitely keep audiences out of a cinema. There are certain players in Hollywood that have been tried over and over again as candidates for star honours, and for some reason or other the public simply will not have them. It is almost impossible for producers to gauge the exact effect that a new player is going to have on the box-office. On the whole there are more hits than misses with American players, and more misses than hits with British players. You don't often see a newcomer in a British film who scores an instant hit, like *Warren William* in *'The Honour of the Family'*, or *Johnny Weismuller* in *'Tarzan'*. I



This sheet of reeded glass, supplied by Messrs. Chance Bros., shows the possibility of creating beauty in the smallest details of modern building.—To illustrate Mr. Nash's article opposite

Top section is clear with a band of sand-blasting. Lower section has glass silvered on rough side. Band across shows sand-blasting on smooth side of same glass. Diagonal lines show effect of 'brilliant-cutting' on the different surfaces

By courtesy of 'The Architectural Review'

am not going to be responsible for saying whether it is our players that are wrong, or our casting directors, but somebody is certainly wrong—and it is not the public. At the moment I am using the word 'public' in the producer's sense, meaning simply the people who go to the pictures. But there are other people, millions of them, who stay at home—at present—and we are pretty bad business men if we leave them right out of the reckoning. I believe that quite a number of these people would come to the movies and enjoy them if only they knew definitely which films to choose and which to avoid.

The trouble is not that the cinema is so bad, but that it is not well enough sign-posted for the people who do not know their way about. At the moment it is almost entirely arranged for the men and women and boys and girls who have grown up with the cinema habit. That is not to say that it only caters for the lowest common denominator of intelligence. The lowest common denominator of intelligence can certainly find what it wants there, but so can the rest of the world.

I do not believe there is a single week nowadays when there is not at least one good film for every type of audience—whether it is highbrow, or lowbrow, or any other kind—if you only know where to look for it. You could not have said that six years ago. This week, those of you who live in London can choose between the new Marx Brothers film at the Plaza, *'Horse Feathers'*, and *'Igloo'*, the Eskimo film at the Empire. I have not seen *'Horse Feathers'* yet, so I am not going to say anything about it. But you are either a Marx Brothers fan or you are not—there is no halfway house—and if you happen to enjoy them as much as I do there is no power on earth that will keep you from seeing anything they do.

I have seen *'Igloo'*, and I advise you to see it, too. It is the commercial successor of *'Nanook of the North'*, and not quite so good, because it is not nearly so simple. These Eskimos try to act a story; *Flaherty's Eskimos* were the story. But *'Igloo'* is more exciting than nine out of ten of the acted films that we see, because all the dramatic values are new to us. The theme is the fight against storm and famine; the hero is just the hunter who can bring home most food. It sounds crude,

but it is not. It is completely unsentimental. The hero knifes his meat into his mouth and gulps down fresh walrus blood with the best of them. You see the starving family, caught by the blizzard, preparing to eat the last scrap of all that they have saved to burn for fuel. First the man has his share, then the dog; last of all, the children. That is the logical order of importance in the Arctic. These are new values to us, but they are sound dramatic values, and the director has chosen just the right shots to express them.

Another new film this week is 'Grand Hotel', at the Palace Theatre. This is the super-production that includes nearly every star on the Metro-Goldwyn floor except Laurel and Hardy and the lion. Vicki Baum's story is a good one, and the cast is grand—but it may be too grand. I am always a bit suspicious of films that carry these tremendous cast lists. However, the all-star cast of 'Grand Hotel' is genuine enough, not one of those all-star casts that are really no-star casts under a more polite name.

The modern film is quite a different proposition from the film of six years ago. It is not one scrap less intelligent than the modern theatre, the general mass of modern fiction, music or architecture. Mind you, I am talking about the film itself, not its adjuncts. The posters and publicity sent out by Wardour Street are just about a generation behind the goods they advertise. As for the conditions under which films are shown, the amazing thing is that the films survive them at all. I often wonder if the renters, who are used to the sound-equipment of the west end of London, have any idea of the way in which their pictures often reach the suburban and provincial public. Within reach of my home there are two cinemas, for instance, both of them first-run houses, where several thousand people go every week, and get their only idea of what films should be like. At one of these cinemas you can just make out the words of the players by straining your ears; at the other you might just as well be listening to the monkey house at the Zoo. And by the way, talking of bad sound systems, they do help to explain the arguments we are always hearing that the British public do not like American voices in the talkies. In nine cases out of ten, it is not the voices they dislike, but the reproduction. The American accent comes out much worse than the English from a faulty sound system, rasping and squeaking until it is very often unintelligible. You hardly ever get these complaints about American voices from the audiences of west-end and good provincial cinemas.

When the sound system is good, there may be a certain preference for the English accent—and I do not mean by that the Oxford and Cambridge accent, but the international speech used by players like Charles Laughton or Herbert Marshall. But on the whole I do not believe the British public cares much what country a film comes from, so long as it is a good film. Those of us who are concerned with film politics are far too apt to make distinctions of nationality. The public feels much more bitterly about a bad picture than about an American twang.

The real point is that the movies and the public are growing up together, the public wanting something to think about, the movies trying to provide it. A few years ago an injection of religious sentiment was the best that the cinema could do towards giving us food for thought; to-day practically every film, whether drama or comedy, is related to some aspect of real life. Hollywood and Islington, Shepherd's Bush, Ealing, and sometimes even Elstree, have discovered that audiences to-day are interested in the things and people round about them—the typists they meet in the 'bus going to business, the saleswomen who work in their stores, the men who control their newspapers, the policemen who guard their streets.

The years since the War have brought about all sorts of revolutions in thought, just as violent as the revolutions which have stirred up European politics. Every nation, and every class, has had to put up with hardships. They have not been, in our case, the hardships of civil war, but they have been the sort of slow, practical, every-day trials that are bound to change the whole course of our lives. We cannot get away from these hardships by forgetting them. They have got to be met, and to be met they have got to be understood. The modern world, in self-defence, has begun to think more, read more and ask more questions. We have learnt more from the radio than most of us quite realise—how to concentrate through the channel of one sense, how to listen with our brains as well as our ears. We think more quickly to-day, and I am sure we see more clearly through hypocrisy. It is no special virtue in ourselves, but the result of the problems that we live amongst—the same problems that are bound to condition any form of real entertainment to-day. And that is just what the cinema is at last beginning to understand.

I do not mean to say that a modern audience is going to find a Lynn-Walls comedy too frivolous, or that it will be less interested in a good, slick gangster picture because it happens to know something about the conversion loan. What I do mean is that an audience accustomed to more or less common-sense thinking will be quick to notice any blatant insincerity in a film and resent it. There is precious little chance to-day for a film like the one I saw a few weeks back, where the heroine fell into the hero's arms and cried out passionately: 'You don't understand—I'm shady', and he answered with corresponding passion, 'I've had the sunlight, give me the shade'—and that was that. This sort of thing belongs to a less critical generation when all was film that flickered. I have still got a trade show card from that generation which reads: 'Please present this ticket in person, as we should be sorry to have to refuse admittance to any person other than yourself'. I gave up the trade show for the sake of keeping the admission card, and I have never regretted it. I may have missed a pearl of a picture, but have certainly got a peach of a relic belonging to an age in the movies that has very nearly gone.

Away with Snobbery, Sentiment and Stupidity

(Continued from page 395)

prosperity a third denomination to those of architects and furniture designers—the so-called decorators who exploited new possibilities and vied with each other in producing interiors so novel as invariably to surprise and in some cases to succeed in positively shocking the unsuspecting visitor. Old and new materials alike have been and are being abused through ignorance and stupidity. So-called modern things began to be created by conceited and under-taught amateurs, and were collected by their idiotic friends.

Chairs designed for wood construction were made in metal. Glass and metal tables made their appearance in drawing-rooms before they had been tested in hospitals and offices where they properly belonged during the experimental stages. Foolish chat about Cubism scattered clumsy pieces with sharp and painful corners through all kinds of rooms. Floor linoleum was put on walls inside out to obtain some meaningless effect. Black glass floors were laid in expensive bedrooms for ladies to regret at leisure every time they put their foot down. Tiny electric heaters replaced the large fireplaces of logical design of the period, around which giants gathered like a herd of elephants around a glow-worm. The craze for change pickled and petrified old pieces and limed them, robbing them of the quality that time gives to wood, and forced a great indignity on old friends. Illiterate manufacturers dressed old forms in new clothes, borrowing decorative motifs from all sources regardless of any merit, and stuck them on their eternal suites, producing a sort of procession of Elgin marbles dressed in top hats and petticoats.

Equally, new design was not achieved any more successfully through elimination than it had been through elaboration. Nothing was contributed by simplifying some classic form in order to conform to the economic demand of to-day. This method seems to make a vicious circle of evolution.

The first wood chair made as a support for the human body developed by gradual processes to a very comfortable and beautiful thing within the limits of materials and construction, and reached its most finished form in the eighteenth century. To take such a finished product and to begin to eliminate, for example, some carving or inlay, is merely walking backward on the road of its evolution. It cannot produce a better article and robs the original of whatever merit it possesses.

We have witnessed a wave of spuriousness run through the shops and suburbs like a plague. So you see it is this plague that we all have got to battle with and see that the spurious is replaced by the genuine. We all have to contribute our effort towards this essential change, more particularly because England seems to-day in danger of not fulfilling its part in designing, partly through its romantic attachment to the past, and partly through our ignorance and consequent acceptance of wrong-headed imitations.

A great many things for sale to-day are labelled 'modern' by hypocrites or fools. We cannot allow these labels to deceive us further. It is up to all of us, you and me, in making our purchases to examine things in the light of our new knowledge on their own merits and without reference to the past. You can, and should, insist on the dismissal of the showy and shoddy. The showy does not give us more for our money. Nothing need be shoddy in order to be cheap.

By buying intelligently we can all help in the fight against snobbery, sentiment and stupidity, and range ourselves on the side of simplicity, directness and usefulness. We can then demand the best that modern designers can produce in the knowledge that these things are obtainable as cheaply or cheaper than the rubbish with which we have been content.

Christ in the Changing World—III

Jesus Christ and Man

By ARCHBISHOP GOODIER

Archbishop Goodier is Auxiliary to the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster

WE live in the year Anno Domini 1932. When a stranger, a Hindu or a Chinaman, asks us what this means, why we reckon our age as of 2,000 years and no more, we reply that we live in the Christian era, and that we are a Christian people. We say that we date our years from the day on which a certain child was born into the world, a child to whom was given the name, Jesus Christ. Every year, when that birthday comes round, we celebrate it, not only with special festivity, as if it recalled the happiest event that has ever happened in the world's history, but also in ways peculiar to itself. The season of Christmas is the season of generosity, when we give both to our friends who do not need our gifts, and to the poor and suffering who do. On this account alone, even if we consider nothing else, without Christmas Day, without the birthday of Jesus Christ, our world would be a world much more unhappy and friendless than it is. The truth is, and few will be disposed to question, that one man's life has altered; not only the history of mankind, but the whole mentality and outlook and perspective of man as no other life has done before Him or since.

Unwilling Testimonies

Who was this man, who has made upon the rest of men a mark with which the influence of no other man can compare? Who was this man who has arrested the decay of the human race, who has given it a new life, with whose birth mankind has been born again? For the fact of Christ we have the authority of those who are by no means inclined to call themselves His champions. For His human personality we may go to the same; the after another they have declared this man to have been, in Himself, and quite apart from anything He may have taught, judged by human standards only, by far the greatest, the most valuable, the most self-sacrificing, the most inspiring, the most sincere, the most true. Indeed, we may go further; we may hear another, of that same school, who tells us, not only that Jesus Christ was the greatest man that has ever lived; He was unique among men, the like of Him had never been before and could never be again; He is too great, too universal, to be accounted merely a man and nothing more. What then was His secret? Certainly not wealth, nor success, nor power, nor learning, nor any of those things which we usually reckon as the sources of greatness. He lived the life of an ordinary working man in a country village; He had no ambition to rule even there. At the age of thirty He came out among His people to teach; yet even here 'the Son of man had not where to lay His Head'. He made more enemies than friends; He failed more than He succeeded; after three short years of this He was rejected and put to death; some few years afterwards a Roman historian could speak with contempt of Christians, as worshippers of a convicted and executed criminal. That is the substance of His life-story: an outsider might read it; a very common programme indeed, so common, that one might safely say that nothing of good could come of it: 'Can anything of good come out of Nazareth?'

But while He went through that programme, there were those about Him who saw more. They could not but recognise His spotless uprightness, and they put their faith in Him as one infallibly true. They saw His influence over other men; He spoke 'as one having authority and not as the scribes'. They heard the people cry out: 'A great prophet hath risen up amongst us, and God hath visited His people'. They listened while others said: 'He hath done all things well'; and they learnt in their hearts that they could trust Him with implicit trust. They witnessed His unlimited charity; His genuine love for the poor and suffering so that He would serve them by working wonders for them; His friendship for the sinner and reprobate, so that He was willing to be called their associate and companion; His sacrifice of Himself that He might go after one that was lost until He found it; and He won their hearts, so that 'all the world went after' their beloved, and one who was most intimate with Him of them all could only sum up the lesson of his life in the repeated words: 'Thou knowest that I love thee—Thou knowest that I love thee—Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee'.

The Key to Life

They believed in Him, and they knew they were not mistaken; they trusted Him, and they were sure they were not deceived; they loved Him, and love made them long to be and to do great things for His sake. Had you asked those men of Galilee why His calling they had left all and followed Him, they could scarcely have told you more than that. But He was more than

an attraction; He left these men instruction for their guidance, simple and obvious as all great teaching is liable to seem; yet was it new to mankind when He spoke it, and now, after nineteen hundred years it is not exhausted, it has not been superseded. He spoke, first, of God Himself in a new way. He spoke of God as His own true Father, then of God as the Father of adopted mankind, and bade men deal with God as such. This, He said, was religion; to honour the Father God, to love that Father as a son, to trust the Father and to do His will. This was the key to life; if it were done all other things would follow, in this world as well as in the next: 'Seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all other things will be added unto you'.

Next He gave a second commandment, like unto this first; he taught the brotherhood of man as it had never been understood before, and as, apart from Him, it has never been understood since. In the common Father, God, all men were one family; in the Son, Jesus Christ, all men had a common elder brother; upon that basis, a new thing indeed, the future of the world was to rest: 'Forgive and you shall be forgiven'; it was no longer 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth'. 'Give and it shall be given to you, full measure, pressed down and flowing over'; it was no longer a question of 'Pay what thou owest'. 'Greater love than this hath no man that he lay down his life for his friend'. 'As often as you do it to the least of these, you do it to me'. 'I have given you an example. If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you ought also to wash one another's feet'. These are axioms of our civilisation; because of such guiding principles as these we claim that we have advanced the common brotherhood of man. We forget that they were given to us by the Founder of our civilisation, Our Lord Jesus Christ, that without Him they have no foundation, they wither and die.

A third thing He taught the people of His time, a thing the like of which no other man had taught before Him, or has dared to teach since. He taught them to have implicit faith in Himself. He said He had come as 'a light into the world'. He said He was 'the way, the truth, and the life'. He bade man 'come to Him, all that laboured and were heavily burdened, and He would refresh them'. He set Himself as an example; He asked men to 'learn of Him, because He was meek and humble of heart, and they would find rest for their souls'. He encouraged men to 'take His yoke upon them, and they would find that His yoke was sweet and His burthen light'. He said He had come 'not to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him'. He said He had come that men might 'have life, and might have it more abundantly'. If men would believe in Him, and would accept Him, He promised them life and guidance that would never fail. 'He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life'.

Certainly never did any man speak as this Man spoke. But He went yet further. He claimed not only to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life; He claimed also to be a King, and to be the Founder of a Kingdom. It was true His Kingdom was not of this world; it was not of the kind men usually understood by the word; it did not interfere with the rights of other kings; He would still render to Cæsar all the things that were Cæsar's; nevertheless His Kingdom was a real Kingdom, and His subjects were real men. He asserted His Kingship in open court, though the assertion was to cost Him His life. 'Thou sayest that I am a king', He replied to His judge, Pontius Pilate, and for that assertion the title was nailed on the Cross on which He died: 'This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews'. Though the Kingdom was not of this world, still it was in this world; the day would come when He, the King, would return in majesty, and would judge every man according to His works.

Accomplishing the Impossible

Jesus Christ passed out of the sight of man; but though they might see Him no more with their eyes, He gave them an assurance that He would be always with them: 'Behold I am with you all days', He said, 'even to the consummation of the world'. It was a daring assurance enough, made by one who had been a village carpenter, who had perished on a cross, made to a few village fishermen, to whom a lake five miles by three was an ocean. To all appearances these feeble fishermen were left alone, to accomplish the absurdly impossible. Yet they did a work the like of which has no parallel in history; it has compelled men to say: 'The finger of God is here'. They went on their way and taught what they had received from Him; above all they taught Him, they spoke in His name, they set Him up as the model of all men, they bade men 'put on Jesus Christ', they

taught that they were 'all' one in Christ Jesus'. They were persecuted, they were driven from place to place, they were ordered not to preach in the name of Jesus Christ; they would only reply: 'We must obey God rather than man', 'and they went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus'.

These simple men spread themselves abroad, though they had hitherto known little beyond their own village surroundings. One by one they laid down their lives for their Lord and Master whom they loved; but the work He had entrusted to them went on. It grew and it conquered. It conquered the Empire of Rome, though that Empire did all in its power to destroy it; it took to itself a dying civilisation and gave it new life. It conquered the invading barbarian; the spirit of Christ came into him and tamed him, it built on him the civilisation of our western world. Let us not forget that we are the descendants of those men after they had accepted the yoke of Christ; take away that yoke, and we have had evidence enough of that to which we would soon return, we have the evidence before our eyes even now. As the outer world has been discovered, the Kingdom of Christ has reached out with the discoveries; since the day of Jesus Christ it has not ceased to grow; to-day those who are able to compute the number tell us that it is growing at the rate of a million a year. This is not the work of man, however much man may be the instrument; Jesus Christ is with us still.

'We Build on No Foundation'

Here let me make a digression; it is one dictated to me by experience of work in other parts of the Empire than England. We are rulers of many lands. Providence has placed in our hands throughout the world millions of men, whose civilisation is far below our own. We honestly aim at raising them to a better state. We give them what we call education, and hope thereby to set them on a higher plane. We teach them the use of machinery, of arts and crafts, placing the means of self-help at their disposal. We set before them ambitions of greater wealth, greater prosperity; and we are disappointed with the results. Here and there a single man responds, the mass we reach is not improved; it tends to learn the vices rather than the virtues of our civilisation. And the reason is plain: we build on no foundation. If we would give them more of that on which our own civilisation has been built, if we would give them more of Jesus Christ and the love that comes from Him, and the obedience, the reverence for law and order for which He stands, many of our Empire problems would be solved; indeed, they would never exist. If we would seek first the Kingdom of God, and His justice, all other things would be added unto us and unto them.

The general title of this series of addresses is 'Christ in the Changing World'. The special title allotted to me is 'Christ and Man'. In this changing world we sometimes hear it said that there is no longer room or need for Christ; that if there was use for Him once, when civilisation was building, there is no longer need for Him now. If that were true, or if that belief were universal, then indeed we would have reason to be anxious for our generation. For Jesus Christ, and that for which He stands, is the very foundation on which our civilisation rests. Eliminate Jesus Christ, and at once we are in the air; we no longer know why we need have faith in one another, why we can put trust in one another, love of one another will be eliminated with Him. Eliminate Him, and we eliminate, to say the least, the grandest ideal that this world has ever seen; we must substitute another of our own creation, of a level no better than ourselves. Let Him go, and there go with Him all those principles which have grown into the very marrow of our bones: the sense of the common Fatherhood of God, of the brotherhood of man in that family, of truth and honesty, justice and mercy, new definitions, new horizons, which have come to us from Him, and are made possible and real only with Him and in Him. We have become so used to these things that we have come to think of them as natural to man; eliminate Jesus Christ and we shall soon find that they are not. Indeed are we not discovering it already? Where Jesus Christ is going or is gone, there faith in one another, trust in one another, love of one another, are going with Him; instead we are bringing back hatred, mistrust, contempt of man for man. Did He not Himself warn us? 'Everyone that heareth My words and doeth them not, shall be like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall thereof'. Eliminate Jesus Christ, and on what do we rest but on shifting sand?

The Necessity of Christ

But is it true that this 'changing world', as we are pleased to call our generation, is willing to do without Jesus Christ, and has no place for Him? There are signs on the surface which might lead us to think it, a silent ignoring here, a noisy boasting there, but deep down in the heart of the human race we know it is not and cannot be. For the heart of the human race is sound, whatever be its errors; it yearns towards the truth, and Jesus Christ is the very truth—the Way, the Truth; and the Life. Let the speaking world, the world of the Press and the market-place, ignore Him as it may; there is a reverence abroad for the name of

Jesus Christ which cannot be mistaken. Let the new morality parade itself as it pleases; underneath, among the millions who do not speak and do not parade, there is respect for Jesus Christ and His standards which keep our changing world steady. When the one has sickened and died, the other will come with the hand of Christ Himself and will bring it back to life and sanity. Let man set up new morals, new ideals, new codes, as many as they will; there are more who know very well that the ideal of all is Jesus Christ their Lord, and that according as they approach to that ideal all the rest in the end must stand or fall. 'Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. Who, when He was reviled, did not revile; when He suffered, He threatened not but delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly'.

We live in a changing world, very truly; but when has this world not been a changing world? Like a drunken man it totters to and fro, never sure of itself, not knowing where it stands, in spite of its many fine words; like a disillusioned soul it is always restless, never satisfied, ever seeking something new. Its ideals of yesterday are the mockery of to-day; those of to-day will be the sport, if they are not the scandal and contempt, of to-morrow. It vaunts its freedom and finds itself a slave, glad to eat of the husks the swine do eat; it proclaims its happiness in many words and with much ado; yet when left alone it falls down in misery and bitterness to which death is preferable, as our newspapers tell us every day. It is for ever struggling for success, and the solution of its problems, and it is for ever beaten back with a consciousness of failure. So it has always been; it is no better and no worse to-day. And to-day, as at other times in the world's history, the wish is in the heart of mankind that the call it hears may be true: 'Come to Me all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you'. 'You will not come to Me that you may have life'. 'He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life'.

One Thing Unchanged

And that call is true. In the midst of this ever-changing world one thing remains ever unchanged: 'Jesus Christ, yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever'. He stands in its midst like a rock in an ever-surfing sea. For a time, when the tide flows, the waves beat up against it; they cover it with their foam, as once upon a time His enemies covered Him with their spittle. But the storm at length subsides, the waters fall back and He is still found to be there. Generation after generation His prophecy is fulfilled: the gates of hell shall not prevail against Him. He is for ever being born again, in some hidden cave where the busy world does not know Him; yet kings come from afar to worship Him, and no Herod, though he pours out the blood of many in the effort, is able to destroy Him. He is driven into exile for a time, first from one country, then from another, first from philosophy, then from science, first from the mighty, then from the poor and ignorant. But always He comes back again; in the end mankind discovers that it cannot do without Jesus Christ.

He comes back again; or rather He never leaves us. He is hidden in our towns and villages, among men who pass Him by unaware of his presence; and where all else seems to lead only to ruin and destruction, He is there building up, rescuing the brand from the fire, restoring all things in Himself. He is among us healing the sick, relieving the heavily burdened, raising the dead, casting out devils, bidding outcast sinners go in peace for their sins are forgiven them, preaching the Gospel of peace to the poor. He is here among us still, inspiring those who will hear Him to follow His lead, to take up their cross daily as He took up His own, freely to give as He freely gave, to love as He had loved, to be to their fellow-men other Christs, so far as their weak human natures will permit.

For Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, is living, and working, and hunting still for the betterment of man. He 'dieth no more, death shall no more have dominion over Him'. He stands before his Father in heaven, 'ever living to make intercession for us'; He lives here among us, His model is ever before us, His inspiration is alive about us, great and generous, true and fascinating, lifting us out of our petty selves, making of each one of us, if we will receive Him, the best that can be made. And in time this changing world will come back to Him. I will grow tired of the husks of swine with which it fills itself in a strange land, indeed it is already growing tired of them. One day, after its wandering, it will awake disillusioned, and will seek rest with Him for its weary soul. It has been so before, it will be so again; God grant that it may be soon. 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we know and have believed that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God'.

An attractive new four-and-sixpenny edition comes from Messrs. Gerald Howe, under the title of the Olympus Library. The first volumes of the series are that 'unorthodox defence of orthodoxy' *God Without Thunder*, by John Crowe Ransom, and Geoffrey West's 'sketch for a portrait' of *H. G. Wells*. Among other cheap reprints may be noted the latest additions to the Everyman Library (Dent, 2s. each volume)—Richardson's sentimental romance *Clarissa*, in four volumes, and Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, in three volumes, with an excellent introduction by Holbrook Jackson.

Points from Letters

Provincial Picture Galleries

Readers of your journal who are not residents in London should pay special attention to what Mr. Read has to say about the provincial picture galleries. Indeed, every institution qualified by the adjective 'provincial' presents a problem in its own kind, but the picture galleries will do very well for a beginning.

Considered as a purely local institution the Art Gallery in Liverpool is adequate, but why residents of this city should be limited to experience of local exhibits and paintings bought out of local funds, while Liverpool money, as well as Manchester and Glasgow money, is spent for the embellishment of the City of London is a question which I hope will soon be put to the national authorities.

The quality of exhibits in other cities than London is admittedly low; this can only be due to the practice of reserving experiences of the great works to citizens of London. The rest of the nation knows little or nothing either of its national possessions or of the highest standards of art. There is no reason whatever for the continuance of this state of affairs.

Very few non-Londoners can spare the time or money for visits to the national repositories in the province—if this abominable term can be particularised—of London, so that in order to give the nation at large value for its money and nourishment for its soul the national collections should be sent on tour for exhibition in metropolitan areas like Edinburgh, Belfast, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle, and such places, where dwell citizens of no mean cities.

The tours should be so arranged that every British subject should have the opportunity of studying every great picture and every portable piece of sculpture that the nation possesses at least twice or thrice in a lifetime. It is certain that exhibitions of this character would command public attention to an enormously greater extent than the present system of permanent exhibition.

Fazakerley

G. H. WILBRAHAM

Defence of Bolivia

Mr. Pryce-Jones and I have this much in common. We have both spent about ten days in La Paz.

Now I am a professional writer myself. I could have made money out of the more sordid portions of Bolivia by the simple method of leaving out the good. But I felt I had no right to take away a country's fame on the experiences of ten days. For who shall tell whether those days are typical or not? Still, he has placed his lips to the microphone and must abide by the echo. It seems to me that he was unfortunate in two things—his company and the season he chose for this visit. Surely it is a little hard that a traveller should condemn a land because he fell among certain of his own countrymen whom he disliked? What author would be tolerated who abused Paris because some members of the English Club were distasteful to him. Yet that is Mr. Pryce-Jones' attitude precisely.

Again, the weather. I am not going to generalise on the cloudbanks of La Paz because I was only there ten days when the rains were spent. But the year I passed in the country as a whole taught me that, once the bad season was over, blue skies and pleasant views were not only likely but inevitable. Mr. Pryce-Jones speaks of the terrible strain of the altitude. Maybe his heart is weak: I do not know. My own experience was that, after two days, I could run if I wished. Football is played in La Paz, and golf and tennis, by English people. Teams come from many parts of South America to play the local sides.

I cannot help feeling that Mr. Pryce-Jones' digestion ran away with his pen. I may, of course, be wrong.

London, N.W.3

JULIAN DUGUID

It may interest your readers to know that, whereas Mr. Alan Pryce-Jones says that nobody would be sorry to leave Antofagasta, my family and I found that town so much to our liking that when I had the good fortune to win a small prize, I used it to take my family there for a holiday, which still brings pleasant memories. Incidentally, Antofagasta was renowned on the west coast because it was a well paved, clean, and comfortable town with many amenities, and a happy English colony. If his remarks about the Club in La Paz are true, I can say that I have spent many happy days in Clubs up and down the West Coast, and in the La Paz Club, and invariably found good friends and refreshment in them all.

He also says that the Bolivian Indians have no sense of design. On the contrary the Indian is gifted in this respect, so much so that I brought home with me penny combs, decorated water bottles, embroidered neck bands, slings for carrying loads, all of which show exquisite beauty of pattern, colour, and workmanship.

May I correct one or two slight slips? Llamas do not travel in



single file, they always proceed in a bunch; while the picture on p. 329 shows neither the Square nor the unfinished cathedral, but is a photograph of the Plaza and Church of San Francisco, which is, I believe, the oldest Spanish Colonial Church in La Paz. I enclose a photograph of the unfinished cathedral in case you would like to publish it.

London, S.W.1

JOHN F. SHIPLEY

England and Italian Studies

I am sorry Signor De Filippi has failed to grasp both the character of my contribution to THE LISTENER of August 17, and the trend of my quotation from Mr. Hutton's article in *The Observer* for June 20, 1932. I merely intended to state facts, and, although manifesting no agreement with Mr. Hutton's view, as any unbiassed reader of my article can easily persuade himself, I considered his utterance typical of the present attitude to Italian prevailing in England. I should be extremely obliged to Signor De Filippi if he kindly would make me acquainted with other facts apt to disprove those with which nine years of teaching in England have made me familiar. I do not think that ignoring those facts would in any way promote Italian studies in England.

Florence

MARIO PRAZ

Borrow and the Gypsies

In case some of your readers are unacquainted with the works of Borrow I should like to point out some discrepancies in the opening paragraph of *The Fact of Christ* by Canon Rogers. The paragraph reads:

In one of his books on travels George Borrow records a curious adventure which happened to him near the little city of Chester. As he was travelling in his carriage he suddenly came across a gypsy encampment where people behaved in a very strange way. They kept following his carriage with shouts and cries to attract his attention. At first he thought it was the usual interest of a set of beggars in a potential giver of alms, but to his astonishment he found the cries when they became intelligible were religious: 'Give us God. Give us God', the gypsies shouted, etc.

The incident is related in Chapter IV of Borrow's *Wild Wales*. Firstly, Borrow was not 'travelling in his carriage' but returning on foot from a Methodist meeting. Secondly, there was not an encampment of gypsies but a single Irish Roman Catholic tinker with his wife and niece sitting outside their tent. Thirdly, they did not 'keep following' Borrow, but, on the contrary, he approached and accosted them. After a chat concerning tinkering and domestic matters the tinker, taking Borrow to be a priest, importuned him for the kiss of a crucifix

and to give them God. The tinker and his wife did not follow Borrow when he left their tent.

In view of the above facts one can only assume that Canon Rogers is either unfamiliar with Borrow's *Wild Wales* or that he has misrepresented the incident in order to further his argument.

Barnes

J. HAWKINS

Foreseeing the Future

Mr. Rowland Kenney is so determined to believe in determinism that my suggestion that the serialist theory enables us to escape from 'the nightmare of a completely predetermined future' is called an attempt to distort the evidence, regardless of the real challenge of the theory. Modern physicists insist that all statements must be made relative to the observer. The question whether space-time events are completely determined must refer to observed events. If the observer only observed events at here and now, or if he observed future events without the power of intervening, his future would seem to be predetermined. According to the serialist theory, however, the observer can observe future events and can also intervene to change their course. Evidence for or against such intervention seems difficult to obtain, but until Mr. Kenney can produce facts to the contrary, he must restrain his scorn for defenders of free will.

Stonehouse

T. STRANGE

I am fully aware of Mr. Kenney's hypothesis which is in no way a novel conception. Were it not so, I would not have advisedly used the qualifying words which he correctly quotes, but unfortunately overlooks. Speaking of prevision I deliberately added 'as is generally understood by the term', in order to exclude him and his school of thought, since the matter does not admit of mathematical precision. Mr. Kenney is fully entitled to his ideas, sophisticated as they may seem to others. Unless he can therefore show that prevision conveys, generally, something different from what has been stated—in other words, unless the theory which he has adopted has the general acceptance of the philosophical, the scientific or the common-sense world, which is far from being the case, his objection falls to the ground by its own weight. An observer may interfere, but an actor whose actions have been predetermined may not, any more than a newly born infant could interfere in the social position of his parents.

An observer may interfere during the performance of an experiment but he may not interfere when what has been performed is projected on the screen of the actual. Should an observer succeed nevertheless in interfering so as to vitiate the result of the experiment, and that is the only interference that counts, it would be a case of *non lien* inasmuch as the premonition would have been falsified and we return to the point where we started from.

Stoke-on-Trent

J. R. ABCARIUS

The fourth dimension seems to have led Mr. Kenney astray. Let him take four pennies and arrange them on a flat surface so that the four lines enclosing the dates on the coins form conjointly a square. Now let those four pennies be the four dimensions and that square our lifetime. If the coins are rotated uniformly and touching each other at an infinitely slow rate, then the square—our lifetime—exists for an instant of eternity. But observe, *before* this happens, the *potentiality* of its happening only exists, and *after* the event, the *fact of its having happened* exists only. The square itself does not exist *continuously* however. So it is with our lives. In the four dimensions of this universe there exists always either the potentiality of our life or the fact of our having lived, but our real existence is but for a moment of eternity. Mr. Kenney will point out that my imperfect analogy allows for the recurrence of time. Well, many people believe this.

London, S.W.7

W. D. JONES

The Broadcast Pulpit

What an enormous change has taken place of late, not only in the kind of topics presented in the Broadcast Pulpit, but especially in the method and temper of presentation! For broadcasting demands a fair and not a one-sided view. It is because I should like this method and temper extended that I would criticise part of the virile affirmation, under the title of 'The Light Within', in which your broadcaster so well and triumphantly showed that prayer is not necessarily words spoken, but an attitude, a way of life.

That a lad who would steal workshop pliers because they belonged to no one but to a firm, is surely *not* a quaint 'comment' on what may be expected from a state 'communised' (whatever that is). Our life holds ever more and more things in common. The increasing use of railways, restaurants, stores, public parks and libraries has not led to proportionate increase in theft. Here, in France, you may walk for miles (human nature apparently being what it isn't), between fruit trees or vines, by the wayside. Why? Public standards are higher. This is no stick with which to beat the 'communised' State.

One gladly agrees that the boxer-seaman and the 'very cul-

tured lady' admiring a sunrise and a sunset were, in so doing, at prayer. She had said, 'Isn't that a thing to thank God for?' Whilst admitting that similar prayer is possible on a golf course, your broadcaster dogmatically denied that a Sunday golfer did so pray. Why? It was that fine golfer and writer, Hutchinson, who criticised such statements years ago, affirming that golfers were lovers of beauty, used their cars to get further afield to lovelier links, that beauty of poise and of swing, curving flight of ball, smell of gorse, snow-white wings against blue sky, and the peace of Nature's beauty aroused emotions akin to worship. Add to this the feeling of health; and does not health mean 'holiness'? This dogmatic and illogical denial has given the tie to the whole argument. I return from church Sunday after Sunday realising what a gain in beauty, health and admiration (prayer) the golfer has in that two to three hour, five-mile march of his.

To hold that it might be possible, but would be an astonishing deed, for a great Saint 'in his trousers on his bed with his wife cooking his dinner', to read a Sunday paper as an act of prayer is another contradiction of the thesis that all life should be prayer. If the beauty of picture, poem or prose could not make the great Saint say: 'a thing to thank God for', the reason surely would be that the great Saint was too great a sinner. This is not the stick with which to beat Sunday-paper reader and Sunday golfer.

Pas de Calais

MOORE ATTWELL

Guidance in Our Present Problems

There have been broadcast a number of helpful and enlightening lectures, historical and philosophic, which have brought us very close to an understanding of our present troubles (particularly would I like to mention those of Professor Macmurray and Mr. Hammond), but always, it seems to me, finishing where we most need them to begin: their application to the problems of the day. I know that it is for us to apply the knowledge we gain from these talks—they usually finish by telling us so. In actual fact, however, the great mass of us have been left no time in which to think other than haphazardly, for which reason, even where the will is present, the benefit which might be obtained from the broadcasts is often perhaps lost. I would venture the opinion that the application of what we have heard looks like leading us into strange and unexpected paths. How are we, new to such things as we are, to know if we have interpreted aright? These people, however, who have helped us so far, must already have applied their knowledge to current affairs.

Professor Macmurray has said that an unapplied philosophy is itself unreal; could not he, for instance, be brought back to start again where he left off, and guide us in its application to our present problems? Obviously such application would immediately become politics and therefore controversial. But why should there not be controversy? The only objections, surely, must arise either from fear or prejudice. I do not see how truth can be arrived at without controversy; and what fairer or better platform could there be than one provided by the B.B.C.? We can hope for nothing from the press, and books will never reach more than a few. If the B.B.C. will lay out our problems and have them dissected before our ears, we stand a good chance of solving them. Many now, I am sure, care little what the solution involves, so long as the truth is found, and we can ensure for those coming after us that there shall be no repetition of the past twenty years. If these problems are not solved deliberately and scientifically whilst there is still time, we stand a very good chance of having to pick our way out of the debris of the present civilisation and to build a new world in haste; to find again in the end that what we have created is not the thing we want. Surely, if we are civilised, we can map out our course before we set out on it.

With all deference, I would suggest that one wave length might be devoted to this, following the Sunday evening service, which might be regarded as an introduction, the series I am suggesting being itself an effort to find understanding and guidance. This, perhaps, is not my business; what does seem certain is that the pendulum, which has already swung to two extremes, will certainly swing again, and with added impetus. Absolute loss of faith in present leadership, the growing feeling that new wine is being poured into old skins, and the intense longing for some source of inspiration, makes this certain. In fact, I believe this has already taken place and only waits the opportunity to show itself. I feel that guidance lies with the onlookers, who have seen most of the game, and with the B.B.C., who have already given reason to believe we may safely pin our hope to them.

St. Albans

R. N. RITCHIE

William Penn

Your Science Notes writer in *THE LISTENER* of September 7 has made a mistake about the movements of William Penn when an inhabitant of this planet. He was not born in 1632 and therefore could not have gone to Pennsylvania in that year. The correct date is 1682.

London, W.C.1

S. GRAVESON

Great Writing and Glorious Bosh

Fifty Famous Fights in Facts and Fiction. Selected by the late Lord Birkenhead. Cassell. 8s. 6d.

By DESMOND MacCARTHY

From a talk delivered on September 12

FIFTY FAMOUS FIGHTS is a generous eight shillings-worth of stirring and varied stories. How varied you may judge from its beginning with the story of David and Goliath and its including several spirited accounts of famous prize-fights. It contains also extracts from the battles of chivalry such as Sir Thomas Malory and the nameless authors of Icelandic sagas have recorded; then a long section headed 'Fights at Bay', drawn impartially from fiction and newspapers. This section is followed by a series of comic fights—Shakespeare's description of Falstaff's prowess, for instance, or that disastrous affair in which Don Quixote became involved at the inn, or Mr. Pickwick's encounter with the irate cabman who took him for an informer because he could not refrain from spilling down some surprising facts for the Pickwick Club about the treatment of cab-horses. I found there, too, that amusing story from W. W. Jacobs' *Light Freights*, 'The Bully of the Swedish'. This section illustrating the pluck of pacific fighters is followed by another describing conflicts between men and animals, and between men and desperate circumstances. (The sea cannon on board the war sloop in Victor Hugo's romantic story, *Quatre-Vingt Treize*, figures among them); there were, too, fights between animals—a dog fight from *Owd Bob* and a struggle between a lion and a gorilla ending in a death-draw. It includes yet another extract from Victor Hugo's works, the famous struggle between a fisherman and an octopus of unusual dimensions in *Toilers of the Sea*. And in this connection one of the few adverse comments I have to make on the book rose in my mind: two passages from Victor Hugo are excessive. Hugo is a writer of prodigious vigour, but he is apt to pile on too much description, and his exaggerations become cruder than ever in translation.

I was as surprised as I was pleased to come across that very spirited episode from *Seventy Years a Showman*, by Lord George Rieu, when the rival circuses of Hilton and Wombwell met at night upon the Oxford Road, and a quarrel led to many of the animals escaping and joining in the fray. I was delighted that this excellent book had also once enchanted Lord Birkenhead. It has been reprinted by Dent (price 1s. 6d.), and if you do not know it let me, in passing, recommend it. And the style of it! As direct as Defoe, and yet there is an engaging finery about it, too, which pleases, much as the decorations on a wandering showman's van may please us. Stevenson would have revelled in the book. Every page is vivid, and yet the light of memory is on it and there is no better compositor than memory. Lord George Rieu, I not, we may conjecture, know anything about style—except a jaguar or circus-horse—but he achieved it in his book. One of his earliest recollections (he was the sixth child; his father, the showman, too, had served with Nelson on the *Victory*) was of a terrific battle (quoted at length) in *Fifty Fights* between the two rival shows of Hilton and Wombwell, about two miles from Reading, at three o'clock in the morning. The Reading show was over, and the showmen were making for Henley and the Reading show was there. Wombwell's got away from Reading first, and Hilton's tried to overtake them in order to get the best pitch at Henley. Wombwell's men drew across the road to prevent the faster rivals passing. The fight began by one of Hilton's men knocking one of Wombwell's drivers off his seat with a staff-pole.

Then the rest of the showmen took sides, for in the profession Hilton's and Wombwell's each had their supporters, and in less than a quarter of an hour a battle was being waged on the Oxford road, at Henley in the morning, such as had not been since the time of the Civil Wars. Even the Freaks took part. The fat man, made for the living skeleton with a door-hook; the living skeleton battered at the fat man with a peg mallet. Windows and doors of caravans were smashed, and men were lying about bleeding and senseless from blows.

While the mêlée was at its height there came a terrible diversion. The horses drawing Wombwell's elephants, left unattended, had taken fright at the noise made by the fighting, swearing men, and the wild beasts who, aroused by the combat, added their howling to the din. Rushing madly away, the powerful team had got too close to one of the deep ditches—dykes we called them then—that bordered the road, and the wheels of the great van left the level, and with a crash the vehicle turned over.

In two minutes the elephants, mad with fright, had smashed the sides of the waggon to splinters, and made their way out, rushing over and thither, and turning over everything in their path.

The adventures of the Sanger family upon the road—dangers from the Chartists, the small-pox, drunken rioters, unjust magistrates, and jealous rivals, make a most exciting Odyssey.

Yes, *Seventy Years a Showman* is a capital book. If Lord Birkenhead's extract sends you to it, you won't regret it.

But I must get back to *Fifty Famous Fights* itself. I had not read of 'How "Oömslöppögās" held the Stair' (for heaven's sake, do not belittle the heroic Zulu by calling him, as, alas! I have often heard him named, Umslöppögäs!) since, as a boy of ten, I gloated through *Allan Quatermain*. True, I found it, now, rather a sad bit of bombast, and the Zulu's address to his battle-axe no longer moved me:

Ow! for the man who can die profoundly like a man; *ow!* for the death grip and the ringing steel. Who comes to give greeting to Inkosi-kaas? Who would taste of her kiss, whereof the fruit is death? I, the Woodpecker, I, the Slaughterer, I, the Swiftfoot! I, Umslopogaas, holder of the axe, of the people of Amazulu!

I remained rather regretfully detached, wondering a little that so much of the boy should have remained in the ex-Lord Chancellor and Cabinet Minister who chose it.

Yes, yes, the best days to read Rider Haggard are those days when the description of a furious fight could send one rushing out of doors to slash down nettles and thistles with a stick, shouting, till either one's arm or voice ached, or the sudden appearance of an adult punctured the glorious mood, and one stopped—silent, hot, ashamed.

Perhaps there is a parent or two listening to me now, anxious that their offspring should acquire a taste for the best books as soon as possible. One word to them: Do not, with that laudable end, deprive the young of the all-too-brief pleasures of reading glorious bosh. I cannot say how grateful I am that I was left free to pay, at the age of fourteen, my tribute of tears to the works of Hall Caine, at the age of fifteen to soar into starry spaces on the wings of Marie Corelli, and, at a still tenderer age, that I had been inducted beneath humble roofs by the gentle hand of Mrs. Henry Wood. Did it prevent me afterwards enjoying finer literary pleasures, that I had been thrilled by the horror of *Gagool* or rejoiced in the valour of Umslopogaas, or, thanks to Ouida, had bathed with immortal tenors at Trouville, or envied the splendours of Strathmore? Not a bit. And what pleasures, now never to be recaptured, I should have missed, had my youthful mind been carefully dieted! What is more, I am sure an appetite for books is the first thing to encourage, not discrimination among them—that comes, if it comes at all, later, and properly so. The first approach to all literature is to *feel*—to cry, laugh, rage, rejoice with the author—to picture things to oneself. Then, as life teaches one what is more worth crying and laughing over, rejoicing and raging at, and as the process of reading itself gradually brings home the more exact sense and the weight of words, one learns automatically and, too, more *thoroughly* than if one had been directed, to discriminate between good books and bad. Those who do *not* begin by feeling, even though it is first through a response to what is exaggerated or mawkish, are apt when they grow up to swell the numbers of those unfortunate readers who *only* like what they ought to—and that not *very* much.

But do not let me leave you with the impression that this book of *Fifty Famous Fights* is chiefly composed of second-rate thrills. That would never do. There is some bosh in it, but, as you would expect from the editor, it is good, strong, lusty bosh at that, and there is first-rate literature there in still larger proportions—Christian's fight with Apollyon, for example, from *The Pilgrim's Progress*, or Captain Ahab's last tussle with the white whale from *Moby Dick*, a splendid, whirling, mystical piece. And there is a fine extract from those Icelandic sagas called *The Story of Burnt Njal*, translated by Dasent—and in such sterling, vigorous English that most prose seems feeble, flim-flam stuff beside it. If the slaying of the Icelandic hero, Gunnar, in these selections sends you to *Burnt Njal* (obtainable, by the bye, in Everyman's Library), the chances are that, if you have a taste for heroic narrative, you will be very glad indeed. The tone of it makes Rolf Boldrewood's *Death of Captain Starlight* or that of my old favourite Umslopogaas seem very small beer.

There are no writings in which the ideal of absolute courage finds fitter expression than it does in the Icelandic sagas; that courage which finds a noble echo in a modern version of one of them:

If neither Christ nor Odin help, why then
Still at the worst we are the sons of men.

The hardness of the sagas is sometimes carried too far for the taste of some readers, but it is grand.

The Listener's Book Chronicle

The Great Victorians. Edited by H. J. and Hugh Massingham. Nicholson and Watson. 8s. 6d.

ALTHOUGH THE lapse of time after which an age can be fairly judged must vary according to circumstances, it is probably too soon for us to speak of the Victorians without prejudice of some kind or another. Although the tendency to dispraise and caricature them has certainly diminished in the last few years, the legacy they left behind them of achievement and failure in every department of life has not yet been completely assimilated into our ways of thought and sensibility, and it is still too early to estimate how much, for good and ill, we have been affected by it. Now the claim made by the editors of this 'omnibus' volume is that it represents 'the summing-up of one generation by another', but it is the very indefiniteness of this claim that makes it almost impossible to sum up the work of their forty contributors as a whole. For, in the first place, the generation reviewed by them in their several essays has been extended to include forty well-known men and women, some of whom were born before Victoria's accession, some of whom survived her inordinately long reign. Secondly, the contributors themselves can hardly be described as representing a single generation, or, more precisely, the general conscience of a single generation, since, for example, Mr. John Collier and Lord David Cecil are here in the company of Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Walpole. This discrepancy in age is not more remarkable than an occasional discrepancy in authority, so that, whereas, to give one instance, the essay on Cobden has been entrusted to that eminent historian, Mr. J. L. Hammond, the more critical task of writing about Tennyson has been given to a very young novelist. Indeed, some of the contributors are by no means qualified to speak with the authority they pretend.

Every age has its particular problems to solve, and it is these problems, attacked from a variety of angles, that give some kind of unity and coherence to the work of those who belong to it. The 'inner conflict' in which the Victorians were engaged, is represented here, according to the editors, in such a way as to prevent the book 'from being merely a collection of essays about a given historical subject'. Unfortunately, this guiding principle is absent from most of the essays, so that only very indirectly can it be said that the book has any real coherence. The contributors, in fact, have been allowed to say what they like, irrespective of any general theme. In short, the book is not even a collection of essays about a given historical subject, because no definite subject emerges from them: it is simply a collection of essays by writers of various ages and shades of opinion on certain Victorians who achieved eminence in their respective spheres. The most concise description and recommendation one can give is to compare it to a selection of leading articles from the *Times Literary Supplement*.

Thus its value for the reader depends entirely upon the individual merits of each essay, and it is, therefore, of no consequence whether he begins reading at the beginning, the middle or the end of the book, or whether he reads every essay or only a few. For this reason it is not invidious to pick out certain contributions on account of their superior merits. Among those that stand out in this unequal gathering are Mr. Hammond's masterly essay on Cobden, Mr. Blunden's sympathetic study of Arnold, Mr. Cardus' slight but charming sketch of W. Grace, Mr. Clifford Sharp's brilliant account of Cecil Rhodes, Mr. Charles Morgan's essay on Emily Brontë, Professor Read's subtle analysis of Patmore, Father D'Arcy's revaluation of Cardinal Newman, and Mr. Chesterton's characteristic and delightful discussion of Dickens.

Rhythmic Form in Art. By Irma A. Richter Lane. 21s.

The romantic artist, aided and abetted by the romantic critic, liked to have it believed that he arrived at his harmonies of composition by the sole light of instinct, and that his art had no intellectual basis, but was rather the mysterious product of pure sensibility. The modern artist, on the other hand, with his classical sympathies and his interest in æsthetic theory, has for some while been experimenting with deliberately contrived systems of design and proportion. The cubists make no secret of their absorbing passion for geometry; and some of their number, gifted with the pen as well as with the brush, have set down in words their conscious aims and intentions in painting their abstract compositions. The critics, however, have been less ready, on the whole, to take seriously the idea that works of art, like the motions of the physical world, obey rules which the mathematician can analyse and classify, and have tended to cling to the romantic doctrine of the pure intuition.

Miss Richter's book is therefore particularly welcome, in that it sets out to explain—but not to explain away—the logical structure of the work of art, and to demonstrate how surprisingly

often masters of very different periods, and working in the most diverse traditions, have agreed to regulate their inspiration by applying a single mathematical law to the composition of their pictures. This law is the law of the Golden Section, which, since it was enunciated by Pythagoras, has fascinated the European intellect and imagination. The Golden Section is a manner of dividing a line in such a way that the proportion of one part to the other is the same as the proportion of the whole line to one of the parts. There are various ways of arriving at this proportion, but the one recommended by Pythagoras—and the one which most concerns us here—is to construct a regular pentagon and prolong its sides so that by intersecting they form a five-pointed star. In this figure the proportion of the rays of the star to the sides of the pentagon out of which it grows is in the golden section. Miss Richter states this as a fact, without giving the geometrical proof, although she gives a good deal of mathematical illustration of various kinds; the proof, however, may be found in the thirteenth book of Euclid. From this it becomes possible to draw a series of concentric circles whose radii are related to each other in the golden section, or as it was also called, from the treatise on the subject by the Renaissance mathematician Fra Luca Pacioli, the 'divine proportion'.

Miss Richter draws such circles on top of a large number of works of art, with varying but on the whole surprising success. As might have been expected, it is the classical Greek examples and those taken from the Florentine Quattrocento which confirm her theories best. Mediæval works, however, like an Ottonian book-painting and the Portail Royal at Chartres are also amenable; and even a Fragonard lends itself to treatment. Miss Richter's analyses are very painstaking and thorough, and her results deserve close study and thought. Though she has not unravelled the mystery of art, she has succeeded in explaining the kinds of works which we instinctively feel to exist between the structure of works which appear superficially to have little in common, and furnishing our sensuous enjoyment of many masterpieces with an intellectual foundation very congenial to the modern taste.

News from the Mountain. By Richard Church Dent. 3s. 6d.

Admirers of Mr. Church's poetry will have watched with interest his endeavours, during the last year or so, to give his work the freedom of a larger form than had conditioned it hitherto. His last book of poems, *The Glance Backward*, had definite grouping, a rise and fall which was signified by sections titled with abstract musical terms. Now comes his *News from the Mountain* in which a similar grouping is attempted around (it is to be presumed) the experiences derived from a mountain holiday. His success in this larger aim is dubious. The relationship of the poems one to another suggests the luxury of intellectual co-operation rather than the necessity of a deep organic urge; and many of the shorter lyrics have obvious reason for admission to the book by reason of their casual association with the theme. Although these shorter lyrics have all a technical insouciance which makes Mr. Church first of all a poet's poet, they too often show signs of effusion rather than evocation: the instrument is touched by a mortal hand (and not by the winds blowing off the fields of asphodel) instead of by the winds blowing off the fields of asphodel.

But though Mr. Church shows a disposition to abandon the captaincy of the lyric which has obtained for him a permanent place in the anthologies, the balance is more than redressed by the longer poems. In these he sometimes raises the mood of succession of moods, knit by the slenderest of imaginary threads, into high drama. The title-poem itself, with its pageant of strong and subtle imagery:

Beyond the larches
We rose past boulders, gentian, coralline moss,
And touched the white paws of the mountain creature,
The first snow bedded in a breast of cowslips.
The padded claws dabbled in that fragrance.
Here we reached the roof of sober thought,
The ordered house of Man. Beyond it lay
The white panther, indolent in the light,
Dreaming its lithe and beautiful desire,
Calm snow-death, and the cruelty of ice—

is superb; and there are others—'Then and Now', for instance, and 'The Hand-Glass of Death'—almost equally as good. It seems a pity, nevertheless, that Mr. Church, who is always definite and assured and daring to the point of defiance in his poems, should have felt it necessary to make his poems interdependent on the basis of a vague and emotional association. They stand so well by themselves.

The explanation would appear to be that Mr. Church is a worker in pastel who begins to feel a chisel in his hands. The development, the increase of power, in these longer poems can scarcely be overlooked even by the severest critic; and it is no essential indictment to say they do not stand being subdu-

muffled theme or being packed out with lyrics of a blameless nineteenth-century quality. To come upon any one of them, for an arid stretch of the shorter verses, is to realise at once that the dryness is one of husk rather than of heart: much to be forgiven a poet who makes a few false mental steps in the excitement of approaching by instinct the core of his native faculty. *News from the Mountain* may be unsatisfactory as a book (though readable to a degree) but as an augury it is of signs and portents.

Wild Haunts in Wild Britain. By R. N. Winnall and G. K. Yeates. Philip Allan. 10s. 6d.

Bird photographers Mr. Winnall and Mr. Yeates describe themselves as 'more or less beginners at the game'; but there are in their book which would satisfy, as nearly as a photographer can ever be satisfied, many an old hand. The heron rising and the red-throated diver approaching her nest have been caught at precisely the right moment, and so these pictures are of 'life'—which means that they not only record one position but also recall the last movement and suggest the next.

The authors have studied stone curlew on the Berkshire downs, waders on the Adur, skuas in Caithness, and collected much interesting material. They are careful, they have a proper respect for facts, and they are not easily led astray by preconceived notions; and yet as observers they have not fully found themselves. The trouble seems to lie in a division of interests; they are bird photographers as well as bird watchers, and they are sometimes in doubt which function to put first; moreover they state—or indeed overstate the case for the collector—and they are wild-fowlers. They hold that the shooting of lapwings should be allowed near the coast where there are many winter migrants (how is the man with the gun to distinguish?); and they can accept the shooting of a peregrine for taking a young curlew, and at the same time say that in taking a rock dove it is doing much harm.

Their most interesting notes on bird behaviour are rarely on animal behaviour; one example is the curious discovery that it is an almost invariable rule of the redshank to take her food to water and wash it before eating it. They give more prominence to abnormal behaviour, chiefly in the form of reactions to interference. Thus there is the Arctic tern who for a short time hatched the eggs of a ringed plover because another tern's chick had been placed with her own eggs which were being brooded by the chick's mother; and there is a sitting redshank, whose screen of grass they had cut away, trying to cover herself in one long stem and then with a loose marsh-marigold leaf. These points are of real value; but is not intensive study of the normal of greater value than sensational excursions into the abnormal, although more laborious?

Life in Nature. By James Hinton, with Introduction by Havelock Ellis. Allen and Unwin. 10s. 6d.

In the mid-nineteenth century, James Hinton was already feeling towards that attitude of mind which has become the distinguishing mark of the leaders of scientific thought of the present; in contradiction to the then prevalent trend of materialistic thought he was postulating the existence of a 'real' spiritual world, and in *Life in Nature* he maintained that 'Matter' and 'Spirit' should no longer be thought of as in conflict but as the expression of a real and living whole. The phenomenal world of nature is no longer a dualism of organic and inorganic, but is in every part pervaded by a universal life; and life, as Hinton views it, is the active revelation of Nature: 'the bright blossom wherein Nature's hidden force comes forth to display itself'. And in this view both Nature and Life become realities of the spiritual world; they are seen with the eyes of imagination, which Hinton sometimes calls faith. But though he uses such terms as faith in a religious sense, he argues always from the standpoint of science, and was one of the leading scientists of his time. Science is the observation and the recording of fact, and to observe well it is necessary to perceive well, and that demands an intense consciousness. Hinton was both scientist, and seer, and perceived, in at such a time when religion and science seemed opposed, that the whole of nature was one reality, and conditioned by spiritual forces. The so-called 'spiritual world', which seemed imposed on Nature, was a mere fictitious image, so he maintained, produced by lack of perception. Such is the main message of *Life in Nature*, a book often difficult to understand, but always interesting. In the first chapters, Hinton attempts to answer no less than the most difficult questions than how we act, and why we grow. He postulates that life is an action produced by its opposite, namely, chemical attraction, and that the presence of life creates the tension between opposites, from which results the temporary breaking up of chemical reaction. In protoplasm, for example, chemical action, which would take place in the absence of life, is held up, and as soon as life is absent takes place in the form of decomposition or breaking up of the protoplasm into compounds less complicated and difficult to maintain. 'The vital

force', he writes, 'from carbonic acid, water and ammonia produces albumen; chemical force from albumen produces carbonic acid, water and ammonia. These two processes are not only different, they are strictly opposite to one another, they are also closely interlinked'. The state of living is the state of tension and inter-action between them. 'Life has its roots in death and is nourished by decay'. To illustrate further the interaction between the opposing forces in living matter, and to illustrate this action in nourishment and growth, he instances the action of a fountain. In a fountain the force of gravity is directed to produce, in the elevation of the water, an effect directly opposite to its own primary action. In life the operation of chemical force is regulated and directed in ways that produce, in nutrition, results directly opposite to its primary action of decay. Chemical affinity both produces and destroys the living frame, as gravity produces and destroys the fountain.

In the latter half of the book, Hinton shows the nature of the spiritual law which orders this constant flux. His reasoning here is not so close as in the earlier part, and he admits that he is suggesting rather than proving a case. He shows, however, that these suggestions march marvellously well with the most modern discoveries of science, and they are not only found probable by the discoveries which have resulted from man's reasoning power, but they also fulfil the needs of his inmost feeling, showing life as the interplay of forces, which on the one hand confine themselves within the unvarying sequence which the practical scientist can measure, and on the other seem to break any rigid and artificial limit to man's thought: the very union of law and liberty, reminding us, as Hinton expresses it, that in the perfection of freedom, the perfection of obedience lies hidden.

This is a book which it is very well worth while to republish, and well worth while for contemporary men and women to read and understand.

Theatre and Friendship. Letters from Henry James to Elizabeth Robins. Cape. 10s. 6d.

Miss Robins' collection of the letters written to her by Henry James does not, as the publishers suggest, throw much fresh light on her correspondent (not, at least, to anyone who knows the two volumes of his *Letters* and *The Tragic Muse*), but it does throw a concentrated light on his passion for the theatre. The letters give, first, Henry James the spectator, most ardent and most critical of theatre-goers, constantly fascinated by the whole business of the actor, with an amazing knowledge of the French and English theatre. Miss Robins was his frequent companion at the play to see Coquelin, Reinhardt, Duse—and in her connecting links between the letters she has some amusing things to say about his behaviour at the theatre. It evidently required some courage to sit next him. 'Mr. James' all too audible remarks, conveyed in terms always "chosen", often singularly picturesque, sometimes diabolic, as though he revelled in mercilessness—would send cold shivers down his companion's spine. . . . To remonstrate, however discreetly, made things worse. From a denunciation so "lively" that it was deadly, the critic would fall to a still more scathing pity, in which I would find myself involved'. Many of the letters deal with Ibsen—Miss Robins was the first to introduce and act 'Hedda Gabler' in London. One series of letters shows the excitements over 'The Master Builder' in 1892-3—with the friends reading it breathlessly as it came act by act from Norway and was rapidly translated by Gosse and Archer, with Miss Robins' plans for producing it, and Henry James' criticism of her dress as Hilda Wangel, and with his final verdict on the play, printed in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Ibsen's methods in some ways were as different as could be imagined from his own, but Henry James fully realised how magnificently the other gave 'the sense of life'; and—more important—recognised that here was a dramatist who amply provided material for 'that play of intelligence, that acuteness of response, whether in assent or protest, which it is the privilege of the designing theatre-goer to look forward to as a result of the ingenious dramatist's appeal'.

And this leads on to the other Henry James shown up in this correspondence—Henry James the dramatist, who did believe so firmly that it was a dramatist's business to cater for this play of intelligence, this acuteness of response. The letters show the inception and the fortunes of some of his own plays, especially of 'Guy Domville', whose first performance ended in the author's being hissed off the stage. Shaw wrote of this, 'It is the business of the dramatic critic to educate these dunces, not to echo them'—and, with Archer and the reputable critics, commended the play. But the dunces were too much for Henry James. Could he have been a great playwright? It is difficult for us to answer now, with none of his plays ever acted, and none, we believe, in print in this country. The truth is probably in his own words (written shortly after 'Guy Domville'), 'I may be made for the Drama (God only knows!) but am not made for the Theatre'. He demanded an audience prepared to use its intelligence; he was turned down by people who wanted from the theatre nothing more than entertainment.

New Novels

Sunset Song. By L. G. Gibbon. Jarrolds. 7s. 6d. Lament for Adonis. By Edward Thompson. Benn. 7s. 6d.
The Rocky Road. By John Brophy. Cape. 7s. 6d. Wedding Day. By Kay Boyle. Pharos. 6s.

Reviewed by ERIC LINKLATER

WITH a most engaging effect of self-mockery Mr. Gibbon puts into the mouth of one of his characters a description of the Scots countryside with which he is concerned. The minister says it was 'fathered between a kailyard and a bonny brier bush in the lee of a house with green shutters'. But Mr. Gibbon underestimates his work, for he has given, in *Sunset Song*, a more authentic picture of Scotland, a truer suggestion of the *virr* of Scotland, than ever Douglas or Maclaren did. I do not say that *Sunset Song* is a better novel than *The House with the Green Shutters*. It is not. Nor is it a full-size picture of Scotland, for it has nothing to do with the Highlands or the industrial belt. But as a living image of life in the Eastern lowlands it is marvellously successful. The stage is real Scotland. You can hear a bothy ballad coming from the wings, and a memory of 'Christ's Kirk on the Green' is not too far away. There is beauty and a fine evocative quality in the description of scenery, and the walking-on parts simply break the level of the page with their strong illusion of actuality.

The story itself, however, does not always rouse the same admiration as the setting. The *primum mobile* of drama is that too familiar figure, the tyrannical, religious, and philoprogenitive father. John Guthrie is only another likeness of the Old Man of the tribe whom youth must fear and whom youth desires to kill; and his wife's suicide at the prospect of making an addition to her quite modest family is a piece of sentimentality hardly consonant with the robust acceptance of life that Mr. Gibbon elsewhere displays. But though the parents are drawn from stock their daughter Chris redeems their flatness with a fine round vitality, and her love for Ewan Tayendale has the glow and the bravery of spring. She and all the minor characters are extraordinarily good.

Mr. Gibbon has written this novel—his first, apparently—without the eccentricities of spelling usually adopted to indicate the sound of Scottish speech. But he has contrived a style that conveys a Scottish rhythm and flavour with singular fidelity, and a style, moreover, that is capable of accommodating beauty, bluntness, and humour. This is a real achievement, and *Sunset Song* is beyond question an important event in contemporary Scottish literature.

Lament for Adonis contains a masterly account of Allenby's Damascus campaign, but apart from this exhilarating piece of history Mr. Thompson is more concerned with the character of individuals than the character of war. The story of Warren Remfry and Martin Chapman is continued from an earlier novel *In Araby Orion*, and the conclusion is inevitably tragic—for a novel dealing with war can hardly call the roll and find all present on the last page. But the tragedy is managed so as to exalt the spirit and not diminish it, and Remfry's death is no more than the proper price paid for a great adventure. He died before the grim defeat of peace fell on men's spirits, and there were more reasons than one why his friend should quote:

Diomed, first of Greeks in fray,
Why pressed I not the plain that day,
Yielding my life to thee?
Where, strewn beneath a Phrygian sky,
Fierce Hector, tall Sarpedon lie?

There is in the novel a strong consciousness of that exasperating contrast between the two faces of war: the evil of waging it—at any rate on a commercial scale—and the virtue of being engaged in it. How abominable is war! How superb is the thought of Australian cavalry riding with reckless arrogance into Esdraelon! And it is from this conflict that Mr. Thompson's elegy derives its peculiar force. It is called a lament, but it is rather the kind of call-to-action lament that echoed among the rocks of Roncesvalles than any sad summons to despair and the vendors of crape bows.

The relations of Remfry and Chapman with the two American girls—members of the American Relief Force in Jerusalem—are described with subtlety and charm. It is not a compliment to our own country that Mr. Thompson had to go to America to find a suitable counterpart in young womanhood to the young heroism of his two male characters, but it cannot be denied that Valerie and Cynthia, in their vivid muddle of ideals, are perfectly suited to play opposite the happy gallantry of Remfry and the sturdy courage of Chapman. Their quarrels and their conversation illustrate not only their own characters but some features of American thought more pleasant to contemplate than Babbitt's. And for a background to the lively interplay of their minds and emotions there is the city of Jerusalem, whose beauty Mr. Thompson is never tired of recalling, and in whose scenery he finds a valid excuse for some exquisite writing.

The war was over in Jerusalem long before peace came to Ireland. In *The Rocky Road* Mr. Brophy presents an aspect of the complicated hostilities there that is different from most in one of his characters is not only a Black and Tan, but a fair likeable Black and Tan. But Mr. Brophy does not take sides. He considers the opposing factions not as a patriot—either kind of patriot—might consider them, but, very properly, as a novelist. He is concerned, that is to say, principally with their usefulness in bringing about his tragedy, and very grim use he makes of them. He depicts an initial situation of real difficulty: Anthony Lynch, an Anglo-Irishman, is a lecturer in an English university; his younger brother Brian is a sentimental adherent of the Irish Republican movement who, after being implicated in a case of pseudo-political arson, flees from justice to find a refuge in Ireland; his behaviour makes things very awkward for Anthony both in the university—whose authorities are strictly Conservative—and in the home of his fiancée, whose father is a manufacturer naturally in sympathy with the owners of the warehouses that have been burnt by Brian's friends. Not content with this moderate amount of trouble, Lynch antagonises a wealthy patron of the university by quixotically championing a girl whom the latter has seduced, and so pulls disaster about his ears. In this condition, an obvious candidate for tragic honours, he goes to Dublin to look for his brother, about whom nothing has been heard for some time, and the scene is set for the final catastrophe.

It will be observed that Mr. Brophy does not disdain a plot. Nor does he need to, for he has contrived a good one and exploited it for all it was worth, and it is a pleasure to read so well managed a story. There is a lot of healthy indignation and wrath in the book, but they are not allowed to interfere with the machinery. Julius Plow, for instance, the wealthy seducer, described with exhilarating hatred, but he serves a real purpose, and the interview between him and Anthony is excellently done. The concluding episodes are written with a fine reserve of power and the final pictures are memorable—Brian in prison, Anthony wandering at night through the deserted streets of Dublin, a crowd before Kilmainham prison, the inmates of Kilmainham and the foiled attempt at escape from it. That Mr. Brophy was wise in sending Anthony's fiancée to Dublin to seek and share disaster with him I am not wholly convinced. Her presence in Kilmainham does not add credibility to the story, but it rounds it off, it brings tragedy pell-mell on all who were touched by the maleficent stars of Ireland and Julius Plow, and it lets Mr. Brophy endow his Black and Tan with a last glimpse of heroic comprehension. I think on the whole that Mr. Brophy knew what he was doing and was justified in doing it.

Miss Boyle is a most interesting writer. She has affinities with the difficult authors who compose difficult and sometimes incomprehensible prose for *Transition*, and she herself does not always write so that he who runs may understand. In the collection of short stories called *Wedding Day* she displays several experiments in manner. But in her most wilful departure from convention she can arrest you with a startling flash of beauty, and her comprehension of the less explicable compounds of emotion is a decent excuse for stylistic vagaries. You may refute her ascription of 'warm dark petals' to a room, or the assertion that 'his kisses would be lettuce leaves to your fingers'; you may say there is no apparent sense in this delightful lyric:

She is wild cool wings
And a flight of stairs
To run
down
lightly . . .

But even where Miss Boyle deliberately turns her back on normal observation or understanding you will find in her sentences a pattern of sound that cannot fail to charm. Often the trouble that she interweaves her narrative with an eccentric imagination or a piercing childish view of familiar things—that turns the inside out—to which we might yield a grudging place in poetry but which in prose we regard with sidelong suspicion. If you are inclined to look askance at such invasions turn first to the last chapter, where, in prose beyond reproach, you will be disarmed by the witty and amusing *Letters of a Lady*.

Mr. Linklater also recommends:

The Ladies' Road. By Pamela Hinkson. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.
The Mulberry Tree. By Mona Wilkinson. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.
Foreign Bodies. By N. Gubsky. Elkin Mathews & Marriot. 7s. 6d.
Snow on Water. By Merle Eyles. Faber. 7s. 6d.
Pilate's Wife. By Jean Damase. Duckworth. 7s. 6d.